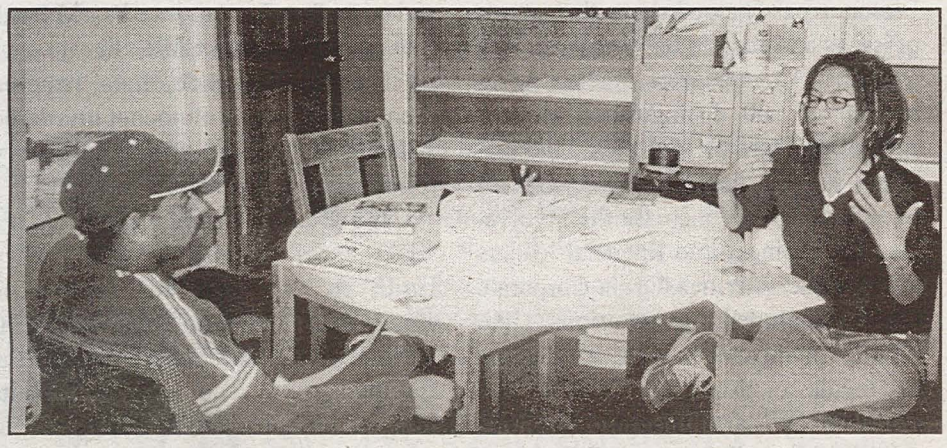
IS HISTORY REPEATING ITSELF IN HAITI? (SEE PAGE 2)

COMMEMORATOR

Published by the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party

Volume 13, Number 1 **Suggested Donation $1.50** **January 2003**

Bobby Hutton Literacy Program: Let's Keep the Record Straight



CCBPP Photo

Kia Hayes (right), coordinator of the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign, gives an orientation to the project to volunteer Sheon Slaughter.

By Commemorator Staff

At the December 7 Staff Meeting for the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP), Kia Hayes, coordinator for CCBPP's Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign, reported that since October 2001, when the first literacy session was held, the number of tutors volunteering with the campaign has continued to increase. Forty-five people have signed-up to tutor, and 12 tutors have been certified through our training program. Currently, there are five regular-volunteer tutors matched up with five learners, meeting on a weekly schedule.

In the autumn of 2002, four new students, ranging in ages from five to 60, and from diverse cultural backgrounds, joined the program. Also, three new tutors are in the process of completing their intensive phonics training as well as learning techniques for teaching reading and writing.

The program has expanded to incorporate math tutoring. Currently, one learner is being tutored in Algebra, and another is being tutored in English as a second language. Thomas Fiori, a volunteer tutor and UC Berkeley senior, who is bilingual in Spanish, now has been matched up with a learner who speaks Spanish as his first language and has had no formal education in speaking, reading and writing English. "This is a perfect match. The student teaches me Mexican history through our dialogue," exclaimed Fiori.

Coordinator Hayes Teaches Latest Techniques

"I study the latest tutoring techniques as well as the success of literacy programs in places like

Continued on page 13

CCBPP Photo

Kia Hayes (center) leads tutor-training session with volunteer tutors (left to right) Gingi Mombasa, Sheon Slaughter, Thomas Fiori and Bernadette Ja'Net.

Headstone to Honor Li'l Bobby Hutton

CCBPP projects placement to occur early 2003

BOBBY (Li'l Bobby) HUTTON

April 21, 1950 - April 6, 1968

FIRST MEMBER AND TREASURER OF THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE

The above headstone-design will be placed at Li'l Bobby's gravesite in Mountain View Cemetery, Oakland, during a Black History Month Commemoration event in February, 2003, sponsored by the Commemoration Committee for the BPP.

By Commemorator Staff

In honor of our fallen comrade, Li'l Bobby Hutton, Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP) representatives, in conjunction with the gracious Hutton family, placed an order for a commemorative and appropriately designed headstone with Mountain View Cemetery officials in Oakland this past November. In February 2001, *The Commemorator* newspaper, sponsored by CCBPP, announced the campaign to garner community support to purchase a headstone for Li'l Bobby Hutton's gravesite, where his body has lain without a memorial marker for the past 34 years.

When CCBPP chairman Melvin Dickson announced the campaign to design and purchase a headstone, former BPP members, friends and family of Li'l Bobby as well as supportive community members began to contribute to the campaign. Brother Terry Cotton, former BPP member, provided the initial design which was approved by the Hutton family and given to an artist to produce the final design for the memorial. The headstone will include a portrait of Li'l Bobby and the BPP Panther logo, to be carved in black granite. On Sunday, October 20, CCBPP held a benefit barbecue at Li'l Bobby Hutton (de Fremery) Park in West Oakland and raised the remainder

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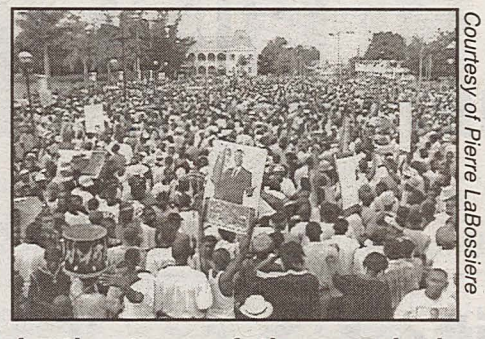
Opinion

Is History Repeating Itself in Haiti?



Courtesy of Pierre LaBossiere

The Haitian people came out in the tens of thousands in solidarity with President Jean-Bertrand Aristide against the imperialist policies of international monopoly capitalism led by the United States.

By the Haiti Action Committee

Editor's Note: Tensions are boiling over between Haiti's impoverished masses (the vast majority of whom support President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the popular movement known as Lavalas — meaning "flash flood") and a coalition of the wealthy elite, former military and small political parties. The latter class interests are being actively aided and abetted by Washington to overthrow the popularly-elected government of President Aristide.

On Monday, November 25, more than 30,000 people demonstrated in front of Haiti's national palace in downtown Port-au-Prince in support of their President. Masses of angry poor people took to the streets and effectively blocked demonstrations by the opposition movement, "Convergence," which has been calling for President Aristide's resignation. A battle ensued after a small group of "Convergence" supporters began chanting for the return of Haiti's now defunct military.

In early December, more than 700 Lavalas supporters met in St. Pierre's church for a mass to commemorate the loss of Haitian lives from a December 5, 1990 bombing, which had taken place during President Aristide's first election campaign in which five people were killed while scores were injured. A peaceful march of more than a thousand people followed the mass, led by a wheelchair bound victim who lost both of her arms in the attack. On December 4, the large business people of Haiti staged a so-called "national strike," shuttering their doors, while poor market vendors and small businesses remained open.

The recent popular activism in support of President Aristide has gone largely unreported by international news services such as the Associated Press and Reuters. Not one single photo of this event appeared in the international press while dozens were filed featuring shots of anti-Aristide protests. This opinion piece written in solidarity with the struggle of the people of Haiti for economic and political liberation, relates to Point Eight of the Ten Point Program which calls for an immediate end to all wars of aggression, whether they are military, political or economic.

Haiti has surfaced again in the news, with reports of violent street demonstrations and calls for the overthrow of the democratically elected President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. We of the Haiti Action Committee believe the root of this matter is a clash between the majority of Haiti's people to have a government that represents their interests, and powerful conservative forces from the United States government, transnational corporations, and the Haitian ruling elite who would deny this self determination – not an unfamiliar theme to many activists. We might compare the situation in Haiti to that in Venezuela, where the United States government was involved in an attempted coup attempt against another popularly elected President, Hugo Chavez, and where demonstrations calling for his overthrow occur daily.

There definitely seem to be preparations for a "regime change" in Port-au-Prince. The United States government has enforced an economic embargo against Haiti since the election of President Aristide in 2002, and spends huge amounts of money to fund the "Convergence" opposition groups that oppose Aristide. On May 23, 2002, the Inter-American Dialogue, which calls itself the "leading U.S. center for policy analysis, communication, and exchange on Western Hemisphere affairs," held a one-day conference on Haiti supported by the World Bank, to talk about the "stalemate" in Haiti's politics and what to do if the "impasse" continues. The purpose was to "review Haiti's political and economic circumstances" and "explore the role of external assistance in addressing the country's social problems . . ."

Who attended this conference? There were private sector Haitians, who got two speakers. International Donor Agencies got three. The World Bank spoke, the International Monetary Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank. The Organization of American States spoke, and the United States Agency for International Development. The Heritage Foundation was there, along with former National Security Agency Director Anthony Lake, now re-incarnated as an academic from Georgetown University, and our good friend Otto Reich, newly named presidential "special advisor," who at the height of the Contra War headed Reagan's propaganda office that in 1987 was found by the U.S. Controller General to be "engaged in prohibited, covert propaganda activities."

U.S.-IMF-World Bank Squash Voice of Haitian People at International Conference

Who spoke for the more than 60% of Haiti's voting population that elected Jean-Bertrand Aristide president? Out of 106 invitees to the conference, three people represented the government of Haiti, one of them a former World Bank official. Not one was invited to speak.

Since 1982, the Inter-American Dialogue has "helped shape the agenda of issues and choices on inter-American relations." Composed of a "select membership of 100 distinguished citizens from throughout the Americas" the dialogue formed the "Corporate Circle" two years ago to "increase the involvement of business and financial leaders in Dialogue activities." This Corporate Circle includes corporations like AT&T, BankBoston, General Electric and media conglomerates Time Warner, McGraw Hill and Burson-Marsteller, one of the world's largest P-R firms.

B-M, developer of the "Got Milk?" campaign, is notorious for defending Union Carbide after Bhopal, for representing Monsanto, and for helping the U.S. tobacco industry set up the "National Smoker's Alliance" to fight anti-smoking laws. A B-M subsidiary sent a "Guide to the Seattle Meltdown: A compendium of Activists at the WTO Ministerial" to its list of corporate clients so they could better understand their opposition and defend themselves from grassroots campaigns. Recently B-M signed a contract to represent the Thames Water Co., one of the transnational corporations profiting most from the privatization of water.

Haiti – Another Chile?

How ironic that the World Bank supported this conference. The World Bank and the IMF have cut off loans to Haiti. This is the same World Bank that cut off loans to Chile after it elected President Allende, then restored them after General Pinochet murdered Allende and seized power. Is history repeating itself in Haiti?

It's shocking to learn that Haiti's "debt crisis" started in 1825, when Haiti, in exchange for diplomatic recognition, agreed to pay France 100 million gold francs as reparations for freeing itself from slavery! Haiti became independent in 1804, but no European slave trading country would recognize history's first and only government of freed slaves. The Europeans did not want to make Haiti a successful model for other enslaved populations, or a successful alternative

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COMMEMORATOR

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Opinion

HAITIAN STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

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Mumia Abu-Jamal

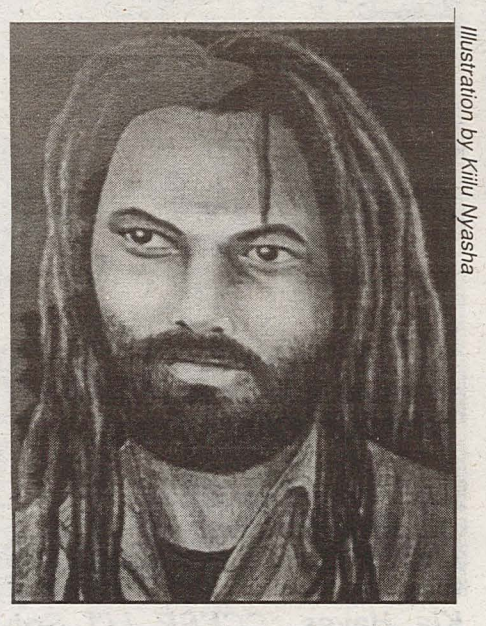

Illustration by Kiilu Nyasha

The images of young, healthy, desperate Haitians, jumping overboard into the roiling Florida surf, burns itself into the American mind, evoking differing responses, depending on one's perspective.

To many Euro-Americans, the image is a terrible one, which seizes the heart in the icy grip of fear. To many African-Americans, however, the images evoke compassion, sorrow, and the shared feelings of loss for their Haitian cousins, who feel compelled to brave the terrible threats and dangers of the sea, to start a life of hope in America.

To them, the treatment of Haitians, who are routinely encaged in demeaning conditions of confinement in de facto prisons upon their arrival, contrasts sharply with the felicitous treatment accorded their Cuban neighbors, who are encouraged, nay — Invited! — to brave the churning waters of the Caribbean Sea to make it to the Southern tip of Florida. The U.S.-Cuban policy, with its origins in the dark days of the Cold War, is a remnant of the American determination to stick their finger in the eye of their perennial thorn-in-their-side, President Castro.

For Haitians, the flight to the shores of America must be bitter-sweet. Shortly after the Haitian Revolution ended, around 1802, Haiti was the proud historical inheritor of the distinction of a Revolution against tyranny, oppression and slavery, and emerged as the second independent nation in the Western hemisphere (after the United States), and the first people in history to stage a successful slave revolution. Their freedom came after the armies of Toussaint L'Ouverture and General Henri Christopher defeated the French and English imperial armies in what was once called Saint Domingue (or San Domingo).

Indeed, when the Americans were fighting the British for their independence, they had help from Haitians, who fought on the side of the American revolutionaries. Indeed, Christopher, when a younger man, fought in the Battle of Savannah, in the regiment of Compte D'Estaing, and was slightly wounded.

After the Revolution though, the Haitians became victim of a dreadfully 'bad press' by the Americans. Instead of being seen as a fellow member of the small confraternity of free nations, and welcomed, it was seen as a Terror, and shunned. That's because the U.S. was a 'free' nation, only in name; but a slave nation in the heart, and in fact.

The victory of the Haitians so dismayed the French imperial designs of Napoleon that he quickly sold the Louisiana Territory to the Americans for a song (thus doubling the size of the United States).

The Haitian Revolution sent shock waves throughout America, precisely because the U.S. was a slave society, that talked about freedom and liberty, but meant "white" freedom, and "white" liberty (and really only meant white men of means and wealth). It gave a spur and a spark to the anti-slavery movement on these shores, as the brilliant W.E.B. DuBois wrote in his "The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America: 1638 to 1870":

> The role which the great Negro Toussaint, called L'Ouverture, played in the history of the United States has seldom been fully appreciated. Representing the age of

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CCBPP volunteers Jo Laurence and Lisa Porter, work on writing the account of their visit with Mumia Abu-Jamal at SCI Greene Maximum Security prison in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania.

Conversation with Mumia Abu-Jamal

Written by Jo Laurence
Assisted by Lisa Porter

When I think about my generation's equivalent of Gandhi, Mumia Abu-Jamal comes to mind. Both Gandhi and Mumia illustrate the real essence of truth and dignity, and the willingness to speak and live the truth no matter the consequence.

I've known of Mumia for a long time, but decided to write to him about 18 months ago. I needed to. I wanted him to know that although we had never met, he was in my thoughts and prayers daily.

When one has an icon or an idol it is easy to assume that they are unreachable, their attention unattainable. This was not the case with Mumia Abu-Jamal. For every letter I sent to Mumia, I received a beautifully hand-written reply. I found myself wanting to go visit him in person, so I did.

On January 21, 2002, in the company of six other women, I embarked on a walk across the United States. As a prayer and offering for peace, the seven of us began our walk in Berkeley, California, reaching our destination of Washington, D.C. on September 11th. Visiting Mumia seemed like a natural extension of our pilgrimage for peace, so seven days later my friend and I hitched a ride up to Waynesburg, Pennsylvania (some 60 miles south of Pittsburgh), where Mumia is imprisoned.

Waynesburg is an old coal-mining town, home to SCI Greene Maximum-Security Prison, and a living example of this country's Prison Industrial Complex. There are two large maximum-security prisons there, which constitute the town's main sources of income and employment. Prison locations are established with a very specific agenda in mind: to make a town reliant on the prison's existence, ensuring its vitality and longevity. Meanwhile, private industry and big business rake in billions of dollars in profits annually, courtesy of the hard-working prison employees and the free labor exploited from them.

As I walked through the very first entrance to SCI Greene, I was struck by the familial make-up of those I shared the waiting room with. Young children were clinging to their mothers, snacking, reading and absorbing the intensity of their environment. The first prison guard we encountered was pleasant. He seemed to have a slight sadness in his eyes, as though he was a little troubled by his occupation. After kindly giving my friend and me a quarter to place our ID's in a locker, he guided us through the metal detector to yet another waiting room.

Fewer people in the second waiting room made it easier to converse and share stories of why we were all there. Angered and saddened by the system and its involvement in the destruction of their families, everyone there expressed an interest in Mumia's case and how he was doing. There is a certain kind of compassion that can only come from direct experience. That compassion warmed and held us in the waiting room that day. Death Row is no joke, certainly not for the inmates or their families left frustrated by the system and its relentless injustices.

Eventually we were called; the moment we had been waiting for had arrived. We passed through a heavy automatic door, which slid closed behind us. We walked down a hallway to another door, then to another hallway, and finally entered the prisoners' visiting room. In a small cubicle,

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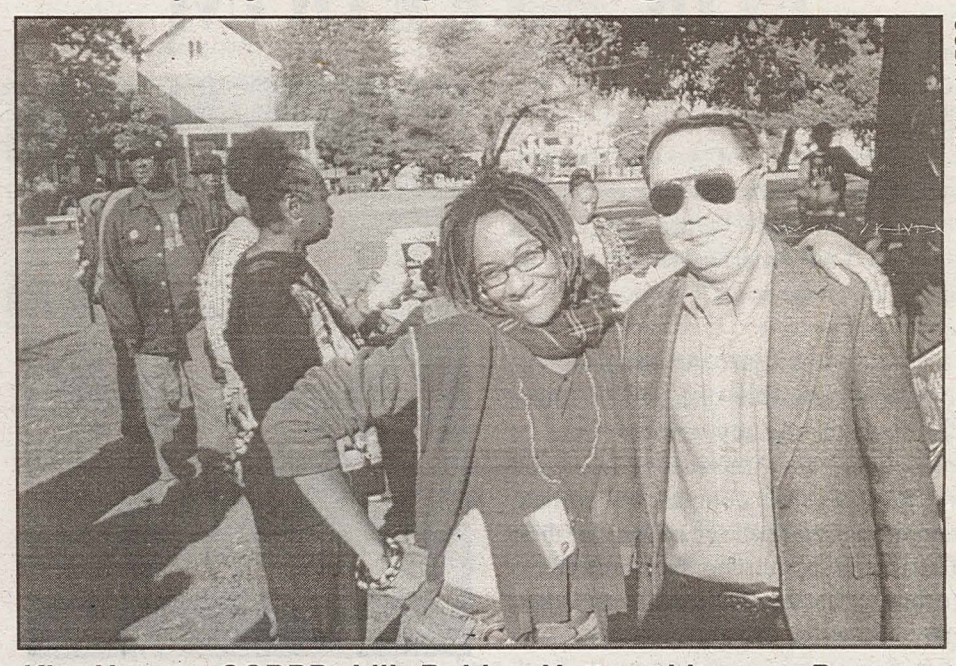
CCBPP BBQ Benefits Headstone for Li'l Bobby Hutton

Event celebrates 36th anniversary of BPP founding

CCBPP Photo

CCBPP volunteers Suemyra Shah and Marlene Krohn (CCBPP Advisory Board member) serves BBQ plates at the Oct. 20 benefit for Bobby Hutton's headstone.



CCBPP Photo

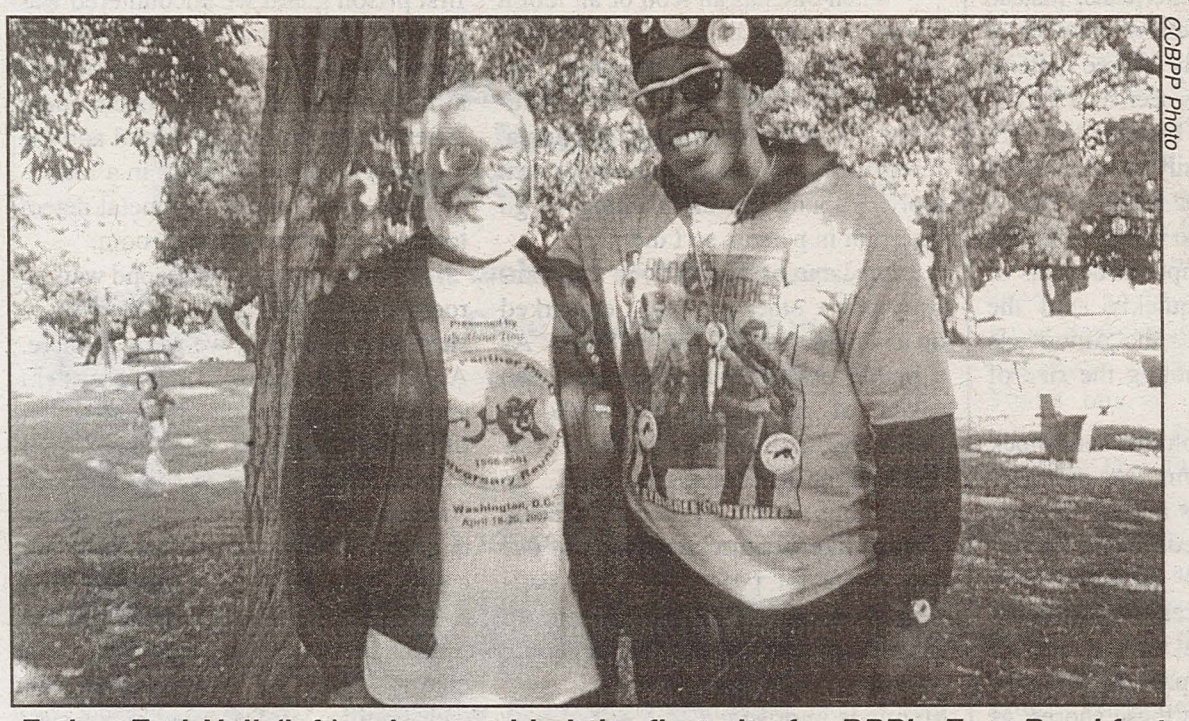
Kia Hayes, CCBPP Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Program Coordinator, with BPP founding member and field marshal, Richard Aoki.

On Sunday October 20, Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP) sponsored a benefit event in West Oakland's Li'l Bobby Hutton (de Fremery) Park to raise money for a headstone that will honor the grave of Li'l Bobby Hutton in Mountain View Cemetery and commemorate the legacy of the Black Panther Party. The Texas-style barbecue brought people together for finger-licking good ribs, chicken and links with speeches, prizes, poetry and live music. CCBPP volunteers circulated and informed attendees of CCBPP's expansion plans and the need for more volunteers to become active in building our organization for our collective future.

The occasion turned out over 150 comrades and friends of the former BPP, including Bobby Seale, BPP co-founder and Chairman; David Hilliard, a founding member and BPP Chief of Staff; Emory Douglas, BPP Minister of Culture; Richard Aoki, BPP Field Marhal; Sherwin Forte, one of the first six members of BPP; and Fr. Earl Neil who provided the first site for the Panther's Free Breakfast Program at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church in Oakland when he was pastor there in the late 1960's.

The F.U.G.I.T.I.V.E.S., a hip-hop performance group whose members are sons of former BPP members, rapped tunes from their new release, "ALL OF US," produced by Black Panther Records, which includes speeches of Huey P. Newton, Malcolm X and David Hilliard.

CCBPP volunteer Kia Hayes, coordinator of CCBPP's Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign, spoke of the need for volunteers and supplies for the campaign and introduced Robert Flanigan, a student who read a poem he had written. Billy Goree (a nephew of Li'l Bobby Hutton) and Carlos Galaviz, CCBPP organizers, ran a literature

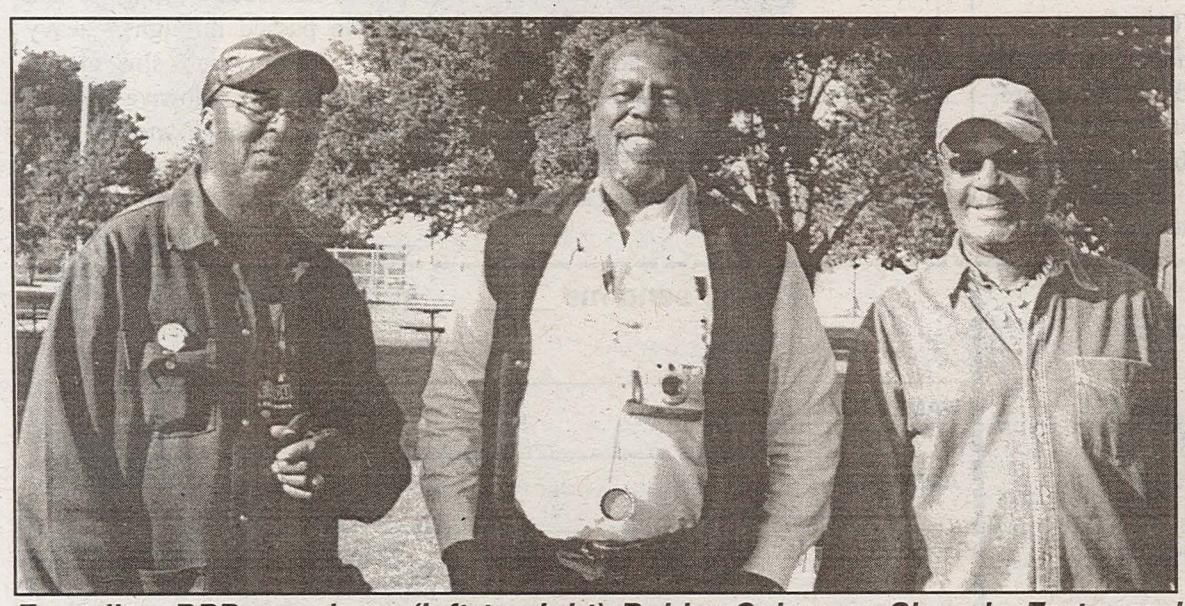


CCBPP Photo

Father Earl Neil (left), who provided the first site for BPP's Free Breakfast Program and is a legend in the Panther pantheon, greets Billy Goree, CCBPP volunteer, at the CCBPP celebration.

Photo by Charles Slay

Isandla picks the door prize winners, while Frank Kellum, former BPP member and long-time volunteer, holds the can.



CCBPP Photo

Founding BPP members (left to right) Bobby Coleman, Sherwin Forte, and Emory Douglas.

table that signed up volunteers for the Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign and for expanding distribution of *The Commemorator*. CCBPP volunteer Bobby Coleman, a former BPP member in the Oakland branch, headed up the team of barbecue experts that included Ora Knowwell.

Event supporters, including the Huey P. Newton Foundation as well as numerous community-minded businesses and individuals, contributed food, beverages, supplies and prizes – a bike and a scooter. Everett and Jones Barbecue donated two cases of cooked spare ribs for the event.

Gina Hill, a dancer, poet and English teacher at Oakland Street Academy, as well as a founder of T.E.A.M. (Together Everyone Achieves More) read inspirational poetry (see "Artist Corner" on Gina Hill on page 8 of this issue.)

The event was part of a month-long commemoration of the 36th anniversary of the founding of the Black Panther Party. October was Black Panther History Month in which various organizations sponsored video showings, conferences, dinners, photo exhibitions and more.

All donations from the event will be used to help purchase a headstone commemorating our martyred comrade, Li'l Bobby Hutton (see article on page 1).

CCBPP Photo

Suemyra Shah, CCBPP volunteer and Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign tutor, takes a break from serving barbecue.

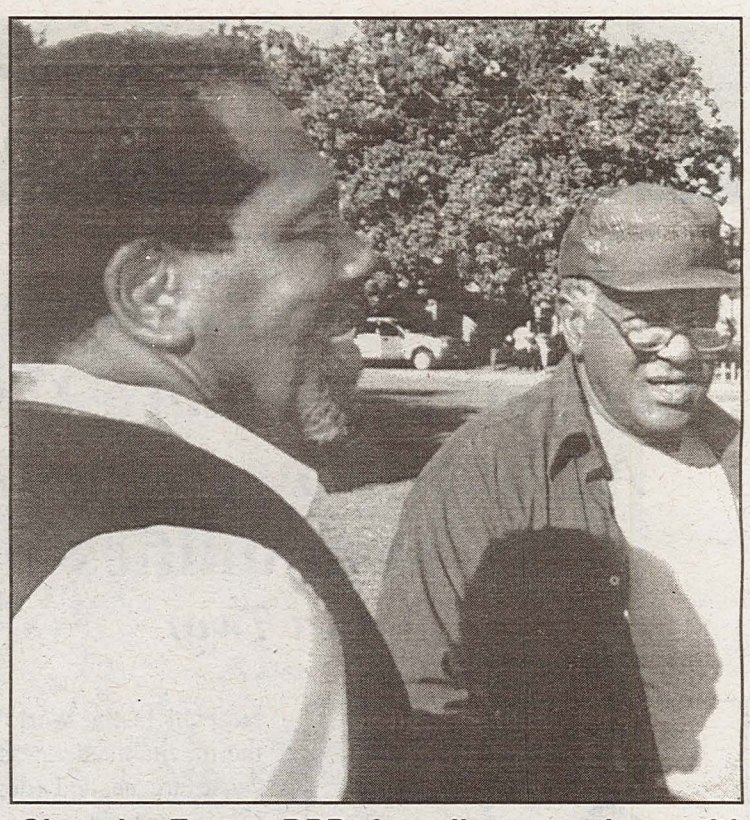
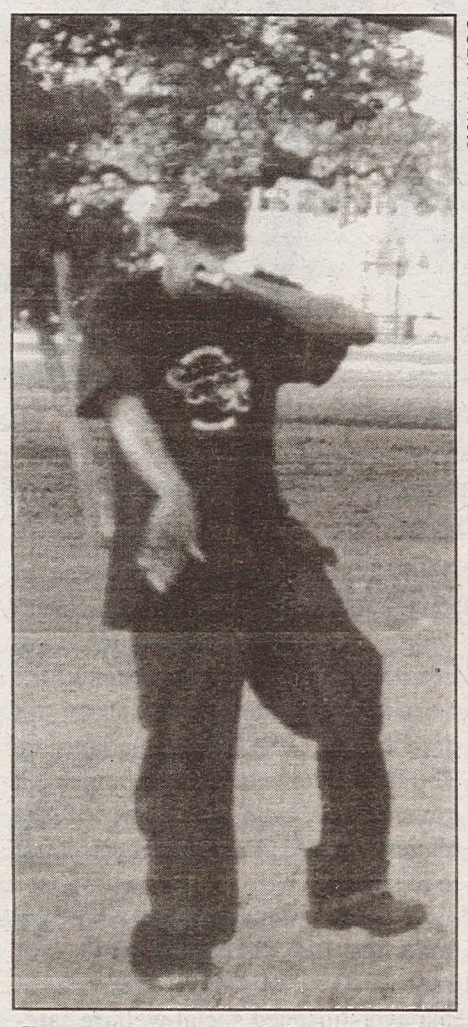


Photo by Charles Slays

Sherwin Forte, BPP founding member, with Bobby Seale, BPP co-founder.



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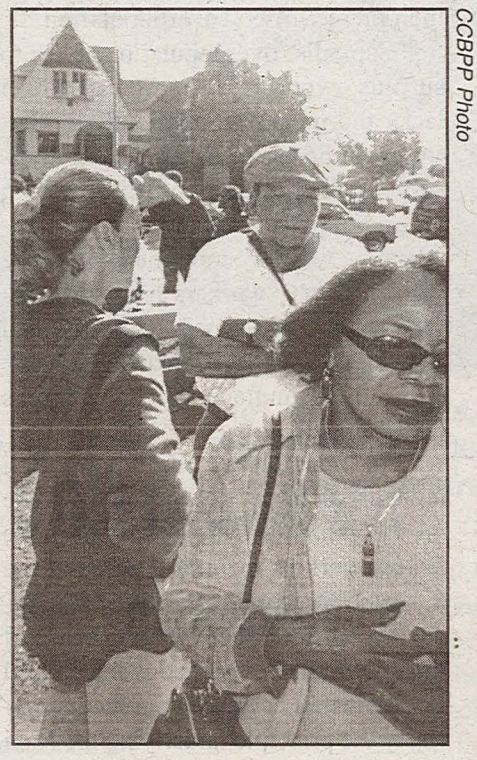
Bones of the F.U.G.I.T.I.V.E.S. gets down rapping away with "All of Us."



CCBPP Photo

Former BPP members (left to right) Brenda Presley, Melvin Dickson (CCBPP Chairman), and Shelly Bursey join in the festivities.

CCBPP Photo

F.U.G.I.T.I.V.E.S's Jamiel sets the pace with "All of Us."

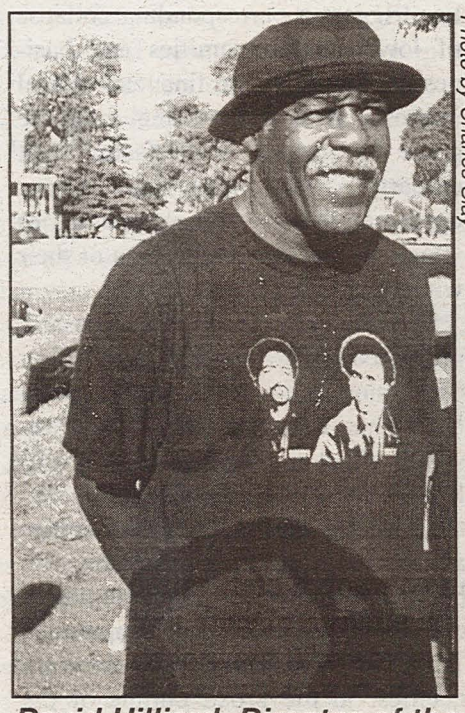


Photo by Charles Slay

David Hilliard, Director of the Huey P. Newton Foundation and BPP founding member.

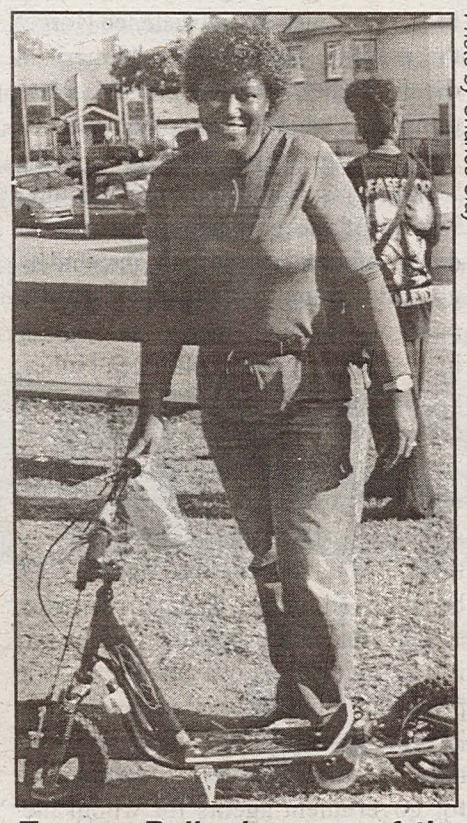


Photo by Charles Slay

Tammy Bell wins one of the prizes at the benefit event.

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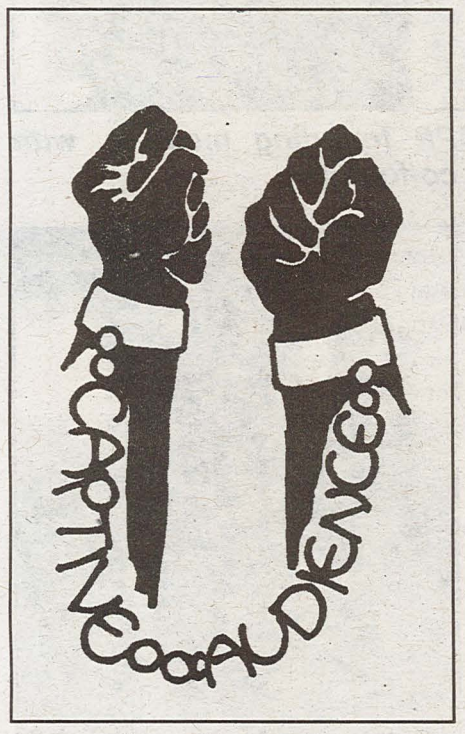


By John Donner

Urban removal is a primary means for further concentrating economic wealth and political power upwards. The process of urban removal (they call it "renewal") involves re-allocation of economic assets (especially real estate) and the relocation of population (according to their relative roles in producing wealth for those at the top). This is necessary to conform to the latest (most ruthlessly efficient) modes for exploiting those at the bottom (in the shadow of the developers' wrecking balls). The famed Prussian General Carl Von Clauswitz (whose classic, *On War,* is mandatory reading for upper-echelon military personnel), describes economics and politics as warfare by other means. Urban removal is a species of warfare by other means being waged against lower-income individuals, families, tenants, landlords, businesses, and community organizations.

Urban removal's opening salvo begins with intensifying economic warfare against targeted lower-income strata (which, under American economic apartheid, includes geographically-marked communities). The first shot is an all-out attack on the lower-income community's income base. This particular targeting pattern is based on a perceived relationship between income and so-called "overpopulation." This perceived relationship is set forth generally in the works of Thomas Malthus (on the principles of population growth) and David Ricardo (on the "Iron Law of Wages"). Collectively, these doctrines hold that misery, vice, war, famine (conditions rampant in the world's ghettos), and the inevitable sickness and death they cause are needed (desirable) population controls, and if everyday working-class people are paid wages more than barely above subsistence, then there will be "overpopulation."

Capitalist overpopulation refers to surplus workers whom capitalism lacks the means to efficiently exploit for profit because labor productivity is subject to the law of diminishing returns. Multinational monopoly capitalism views the continued existence of such surplus workers as an unnecessary and burdensome expense, which it is not only unwilling but also unable to pay and simultaneously maintain its dominant ruling-class position.

An optimum or ideal population level exists under capitalism when the most commodities are produced by the fewest workers thereby generating the lowest labor costs, and either nonproductive surplus labor or the expense of their continued existence is minimized or eliminated completely. This is precisely the principle underlying the Nazi concentration labor and death camps.

The contours of what must be done are manifest in the broad outline of the BPP's 10-Point Program, which only the power of the people can fully implement.

Insofar as any community's family and business bases depend on its income, an all-out attack on a community's income base is at once an attack on its families and businesses. A ruling-class policy of protracted attack on the income base of our oppressed communities is self-evident in the institurionalzation of an under-class economic subculture wherein adequate living income and benefits are the very rare exception rather than the rule.

The daily conditions that comprise ghetto reality are the material manifestation of the multiplier effect of a persistent lack of sufficient living income and benefits. The proper functioning of families, homes, businesses, cultural institutions, and organizations — consistent with the true historic self-interests of our oppressed lower-income communities — is impossible without an adequate (no strings attached) source of financing in the form of necessary conditions of life: wages, benefits, and income. Lower-income people, for example, are largely communities of renters (as opposed to homeowners) whose inadequate income represent insufficient profit incentive (under the current set-up) for the financing of decent, safe, quiet, affordable housing. The federal government and municipal governments who are some of the biggest American slumlords can attest to this fact.

Black Panther Archives

In the early 1970s the Black Panther Party organized volunteers and supporters against Sickle Cell Anemia, a deadly blood disease that affects mostly African Americans.

Highly concentrated poverty underlies the disproportionate (yet increasingly dwindling) presence of taxpayer-financed social welfare safety net programs as a dubious alternative to living wages and benefits in lower-income communities. The legal (above-ground) economy barely provides for subsistence (forget the mass-media-marketed "American dream" nightmare) The illegal (underground) economy — another dubious alternative — functions to provide temporary survival for ever-widening sectors of the population. But, in a desert of desolate despair the underground economy is mostly merely a mirage promising escape and ending in a coffin or prison cell. Remember, it's the glitter of the spider's web that attracts and traps the fly.

Dilapidated housing (complete with faulty wiring, broken plumbing, and non-working or no smoke detectors), abandoned/semi-abandoned buildings (doubling as dope, prostitution, and underground economy infrastructure) are all elements of a prevalent poverty-related pathology in our oppressed lower-income communities that adds up to a bonanza for government agents for whom the misery of lower-income people translates into a paycheck.

The presence of so many ruling-class agencies and agents serves to further undermine the already beleaguered income base of our lower-income communities which are their feeding grounds. The costs associated with these agencies drive up taxes in our lower-income communities and force cuts in social programs at the same time that crime and other poverty-related conditions drive up insurance rates and drive down property values.

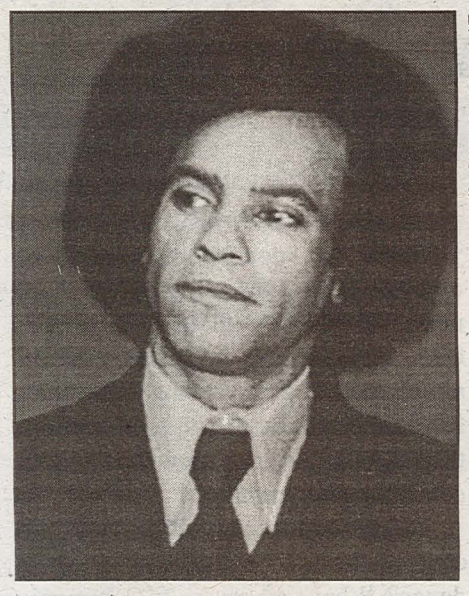
Lower-income businesses have to compete in a business environment with multinational chains, franchises, and other wealthy interests who can price or purchase them right out of the market. Each decline in the income base of our lower-income communities triggers a corresponding collapse of lower-income families and businesses. Banking and financial special interests then deliver the coup de grace by placing a de facto credit embargo (red-lining) around our oppressed lower-income communities which accelerates the process of their withering and dying.

It is only those who are oppressed, organized on the common basis of our oppression in control over the institutions that determine the conditions which affect the very essence of our lives who can rectify this thing that continues to devour our communities and rearrange our lives consistent with being more efficiently and ruthlessly exploited, oppressed, and suppressed. The contours of what must be done are manifest in the broad outline of the BPP's 10-Point Program, which only the power of the people can fully implement.

Archives

RESPONSE OF THE GOVERNMENT TO THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY

Huey's Corner



BPP Intercommunal News

Dr. Huey P. Newton

Editor's Note: The following article is a continuation from October 2002, taken from the 1977 Ph.D. dissertation on The History of Consciousness by Dr. Huey P. Newton. The thesis was recently published by the Huey P. Newton Foundation in a book called The War Against the Panthers: A Study of Oppression in America, *(Writers and Readers, 1999), and is available at your local bookstore.*

The following piece will lay bare the FBI, DEA, CIA, and other government agencies, machinations, or secret war, against their most despised political group of the 1960s, and 70s eras — the BPP...

The Superagency Approach to Crushing Dissent

By 1973 this process of employing the narcotics and crime "covers" reached its climax with the creation of a new intelligence superagency—the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). At the time of its formation, the DEA employed more than 4,000 agents and analysts—including some 53 former (or detached) CIA agents and a dozen counterintelligence experts from the military or other intelligence agencies. The DEA had the authority "to request wiretaps and no-knock warrants, and to submit targets to the Internal Revenue Service."[24] With its contingent of former CIA and counterintelligence agents, it had the talent to enter residences surreptitiously, distribute "black" (or misleading) information, plant phony evidence, and conduct even more extreme clandestine assignments.

The origin of DEA and its intended purpose are explained by Epstein as follows:

According to [those] familiar with the plan, [G. Gordon] Liddy proposed ... to detach agents and specialists who could be relied upon by the White house from the BNDD [Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs], the IRS, the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms division, and the Bureau of Customs. This new office would operate directly out of the executive office of the president. The beauty of the Liddy plan was its simplicity: it did not even need approval from Congress. The president could create such an office by executive decree, and order all other agencies of the government to cooperate by supplying liaisons and agents. Congress would not even have to appropriate funds, according to those familiar with the Liddy plan: The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), which was located in John Mitchell's Department of Justice, could funnel monies via local police departments to finance these new strike forces. The new office would have ... wiretappers from the BNDD; customs agents, with their unique "search authority"; IRS agents who could feed the names of suspects into the IRS's target-selection committee for a grueling audit; and CIA agents for "the more extraordinary missions." In addition, since it would control grants from the LEAA, this new office could mobilize support from state and local police forces in areas in which it desired to operate.

The most important feature of the Liddy plan, however, was that the White house agents would act under the cloak of combating the drug menace. Since public fears were being excited about this deadly threat to the children of American citizens and their property, few would oppose vigorous measures even if its agents were occasionally caught in such excesses as placing an unauthorized wiretap. On the contrary, if the dread of drugs could be maintained, Congress and the press would probably applaud such determined actions. Krogh and the White house strategists immediately saw the advantages to having the new office operate its agents under the emblem of a heroin crusade... and Liddy's option paper, much modified in form to remove any embarrassing illegalities, was sent to the president with the recommendations of Krogh and Ehrlichman....

Finally, in December 1971, the president ordered Ehrlichman and Krogh to create the permanent White house-controlled investigative unit envisioned in the option paper drawn up by Liddy. The new unit was to be known as the Office of Drug Abuse Law Enforcement.[25]

On January 28, 1972, the Office of Drug Abuse Law Enforcement (ODALE), the permanent investigative force which ostensibly would operate against narcotics traffickers, was officially created by an executive order of the president:

Since there was virtually no precedent for an agency like the Office of Drug Abuse Law Enforcement, [ODALE director Myles J.] Ambrose had to proceed step by step in assembling his strike forces. The first step was to appoint regional directors who would superintend and select the federal agents and local police on each strike force in each of the thirty-three target cities he selected.... Fifty other lawyers, many of whom Ambrose knew personally, were deployed in instantly created field offices of the new organization. Four hundred investigators were requisitioned from the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs and the Bureau of Customs, and Ambrose requested more than a hundred liaisons from the Internal Revenue Service, as well as specialists from other agencies of the government. This was all accomplished during the first thirty days of existence of this new office, in what Ambrose himself referred to as a "monumental feat of organization."

... the new strike forces had little resemblance to more conventional law-enforcement forces. These highly unorthodox units, which were being controlled from the White house through the president's special consultant Myles Ambrose, included not only trained narcotics and customs officers but also Immigration and Naturalization Service officers; Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms control agents; probation officers; state troopers; and local police officers.... With the authority of court-authorized no-knock warrants and wiretaps they could strike at will in any of the target cities and against virtually anyone selected as a target. by March, 1972, the strike forces had become operational.[26]

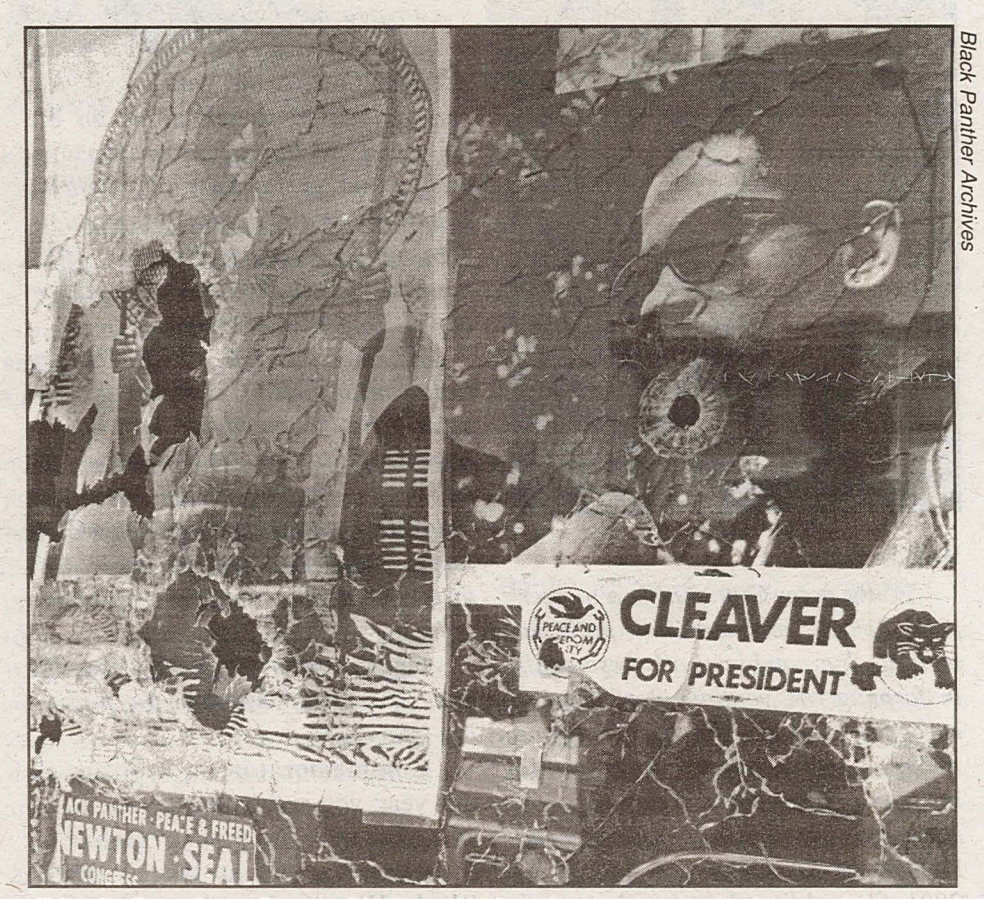
There was some resistance to Law Enforcement Assistance Administration officials to using LEAA money to finance ODALE operations. They argued that Congress never intended for LEAA grants to be used to bypass the appropriations process:

So with White house assistance, the new office established a series of local organizations, with such names as "Research Associates," through which grants could be made by the LEAA. The money was then channeled back to selected strike forces, with these organizations acting, in effect, as money conduits.[27]

The California conduit for these "laundered" funds was the Organized Crime and Criminal Intelligence Branch (OCCIB) of the State Department of Justice, which had already been set up in 1970 by California Attorney General Evelle Younger. A report circulated by the OCCIB in 1972 identified among its prime targets the Black Panther Party.[28]

The creation of a new superagency to direct the counterintelligence activities against the BPP and other dissident groups was an indication of how badly the federal government wanted to destroy the Panthers. The successful extent of coordination between law enforcement agencies intent on getting the BPP is not yet clear, largely because documents showing this direction have yet to be discovered. Still, the general method of operation described by Epstein appears to have been employed against the Party, at least if one focuses on just three agencies for which some documented information is available: the FBI, IRS, and CIA.

Continued on page 11



Black Panther Archives

Black Panther Party National Headquarters window, shattered by drunken members of Emeryville police department (suburb of Oakland) after the jury's verdict of Huey P. Newton trial of involuntary manslaughter.

Artist Corner

Gina Hill and T.E.A.M.

CCBPP Photo

History Labor College Celebration in February 2002. Later in the month, she invited members of CCBPP staff to address her class at Oakland Street Academy, where the young audience was treated to presentations on the history of the Black Panther Party as well as an explanation of CCBPP's Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign. Some of the students from her class have come to CCBPP to receive tutoring for reading comprehension.

As part of the Black History Celebration, Gina performed with other T.E.A.M. members, Le Nguyen, Adetole Williams, Alison Hammond, Victor Valenzuela, Nirali Jani, and Thinh Thai. After reciting poetry Gina joined with T.E.A.M. members in performing capoeira (martial art) dance.

Photo by Charles Slay

At CCBPP's 4th Annual Black History Labor College Celebration, T.E.A.M. members perform a Capoeira, Afro-Brazilian (dance) martial art.

By Kia Hayes

Editor note: *Gina Hill is a dancer, poet, artist, teacher and political activist. She combined all these skills in forming the youthful performance ensemble T.E.A.M. (Together Everyone Achieves More), which she describes in the following interview on November 29. CCBPP first met Gina Hill before the Christmas holiday of 2001. She told us that she along with T.E.A.M. had visited Santiago de Cuba the past summer as part of Oakland's cultural exchange project, a sister city program. She related how the Cuban people she met held tremendous respect for the Black Panther Party and the BPP youth, especially Li'l Bobby Hutton. While in Santiago de Cuba, T.E.A.M. members painted a mural of Lil Bobby Hutton.*

In January 2002, Gina brought youthful, enthusiastic, vibrant members of T.E.A.M. to the CCBPP office and we invited them to participate with CCBPP's 4th Annual, Black History Labor College Celebration in February 2002. Later in the month, she invited members of CCBPP staff to address her class at Oakland Street Academy, where the young audience was treated to presentations on the history of the Black Panther Party as well as an explanation of CCBPP's Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign. Some of the students from her class have come to CCBPP to receive tutoring for reading comprehension.

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On November 29, 2002, Gina Hill gave The Commemorator *the following interview:*

Commemorator: In February of this year, you and your group T. E. A. M. (Together Everyone Achieves More) performed at the CCBPP's Black History Month celebration. How did you become acquainted with the CCBPP? When did you become aware of the history of the Black Panther Party?

Gina Hill: I became acquainted with CCBPP by being in the community and seeing people at different events. I have always been interested in the Black Panther Party. A few years ago, I met [CCBPP Chair and Commemorator editor] Melvin [Dickson]. We had a conversation and have been in touch ever since.

Before that, I lived in Cincinnati, Ohio where I attended high school. Being dissatisfied with education, I became aware. My parents had a lot of respect for the Black Panther Party. I read about Angela Davis. She was one of the people that I admired.

Commemorator: How long have you been performing dance and reciting poetry? What brought you to form the dance troupe?

Gina Hill: When I came out to southern California in 1993, and I started to get serious about dance—especially West African dance. I started to meet people from O-town and said, "Yeah, I want to go there, that's where the Black Panther Party is from." While living in Oakland, we formed a T.E.A.M at Havenscourt Middle School. I used to teach there. We began to form as a group that was multicultural. A young girl, a seventh grader named Melissa came up with the name, T.E.A.M., Together Everyone Achieves More.

Commemorator: You have incorporated Capoeira. Can you tell us more about this art form?

Gina Hill: Capoeira is an Afro-Brazilian martial art. It comes from Angola, southern Africa. It was used to disguise training for martial arts. The slaves would get together and would plan for revolt and it was like training yourself for combat against your oppressors and slave masters. It connects the youth with their history. It keeps them healthy. It gives them discipline, makes them strong and gives them focus. Capoeira is good because the kids start to open themselves up to education and learning.

Commemorator: What are the central themes in your poetry and dance? What do you try to communicate in your dance and your verse?

Gina Hill: I reflect a lot about what's going on in the society, so that it is educational. Most of the poetry that I write is geared towards trying to change people's minds and trying to educate the youth about the issues that are going on.

Commemorator: What issues — internal or external — hinder your creative process? How do you counteract them?

Gina Hill: Not having enough money to survive, and having to work so much. I love the school where I work, but it takes up a lot of time. My time is taken away from my creativity. I don't sleep a lot. I manage

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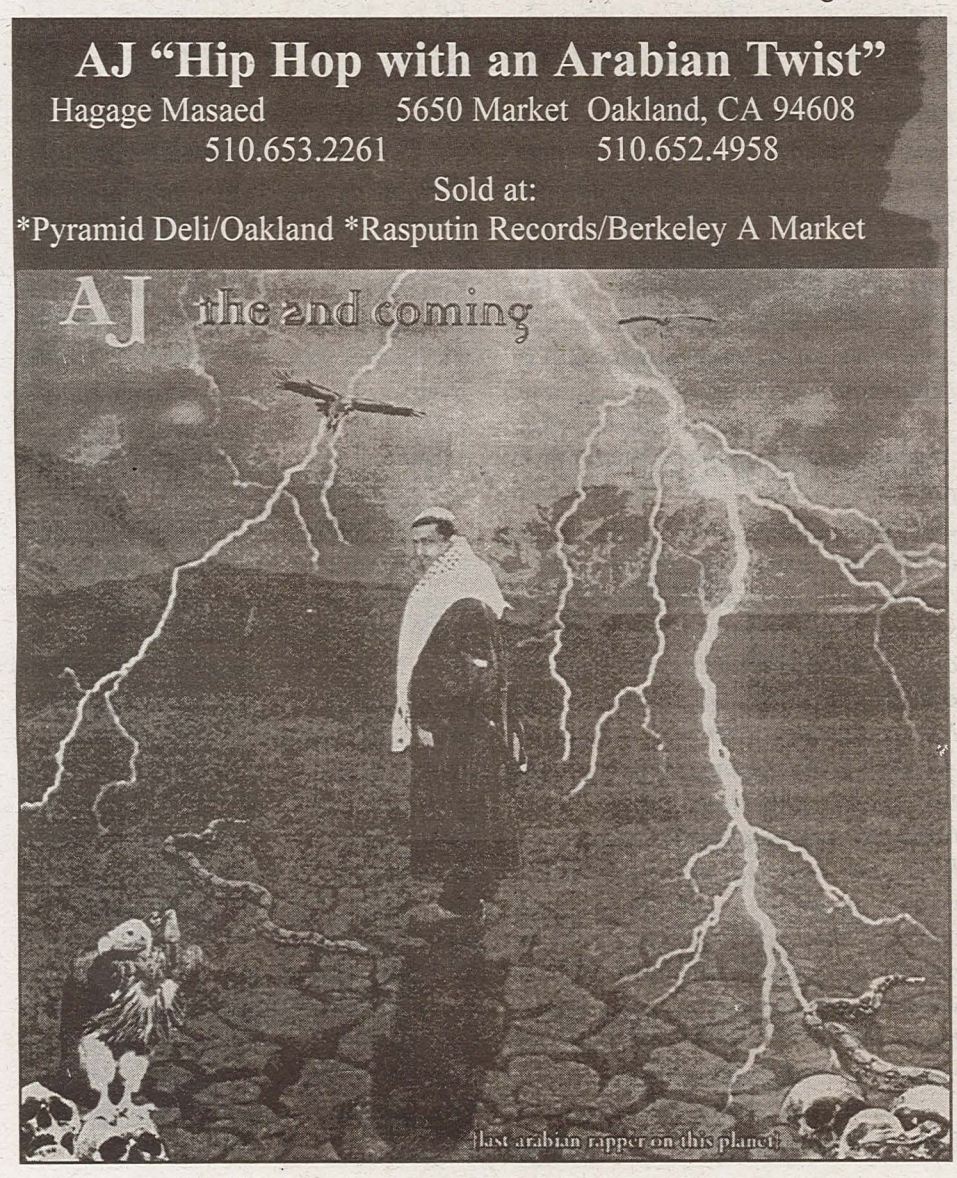
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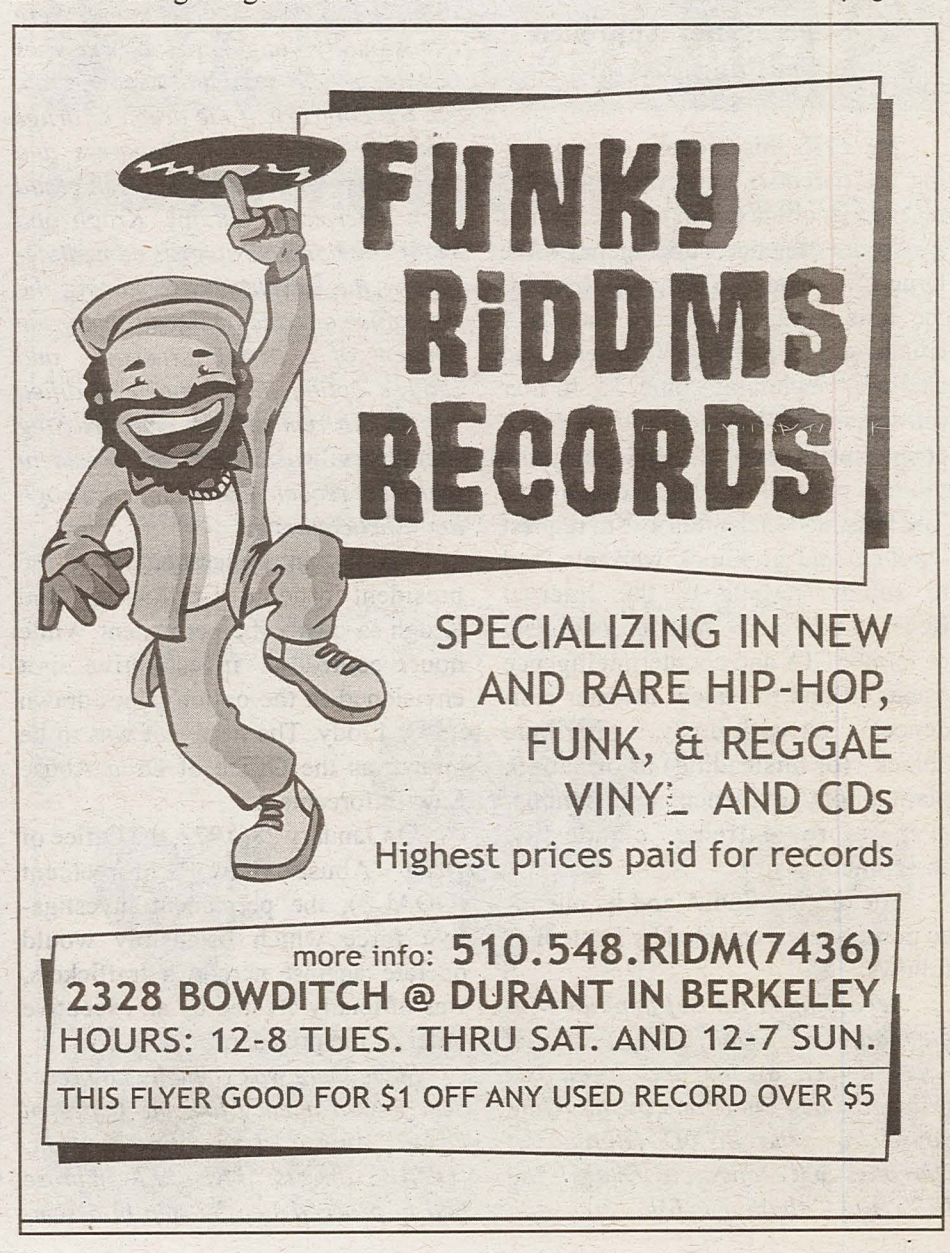
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Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I was looking through the October issue of *The Commemorator* and thought the articles were well written. Then I came to a full-page ad from ACT UP San Francisco. This ad is advocating genocide of Black people by intentionally spreading disinformation about AIDS, HIV, and particularly HIV infection in Africa. I am very surprised that you accepted the ad and the money behind it. I am not an AIDS activist, but I know a good bit about the subject, and have been in South Africa and visited hospitals there.

I think ACT UP SF is an organization of provocateurs. Even though I know that there is feuding between different Panther support groups, I have never heard anything that leads me to believe that any of the Panther groups are up to no good. That isn't the case with ACT UP SF. I think you should work with ACT UP East Bay, especially John Iverson, to clear up anything you print about HIV in the Black community or in Africa. You could also use Dr. Mike Alcalay (currently Medical Director of the Cannibus Buyers Club or Medical Marijuana Program of Oakland), who is HIV infected and an expert on this subject, for good factual information.

Just to give you a sense of my concerns: the ad says that the HIV rate in Africa is low, and that South Africa has only about 12,000 cases. They do this by confusing the definition of infection. It no longer matters whether or not someone has been technically called an AIDS case. If they have HIV, they have it, and it will get them if they aren't treated.

In South Africa alone there are millions infected, not 12,000. In the largest hospital in the world, the Chris Hanni (sic) Hospital at Soweto, 26% of the Black African women who gave birth in 2000 were already infected. Isn't that frightening enough, without disinformation? The Mbeki South African government refused to provide these women with medicines to prevent transmission to their children at birth. (I think the government recently reversed that policy due to pressure from the Trade Union movement of South Africa (COSATU) and international pressure.)

Then the ad goes on to say that the drug treatments are toxic. Well, every drug known to man has side effects, sometimes serious. These drugs are no exception, but their effects are usually acceptable to patients. Look at how many people are living successfully with HIV infection in the U.S. because of the suppression of disease by these drugs.

You should not accept money or ads from ACT UP SF. They are only trying to confuse the African American population and are provocateurs. If they aren't being paid by the U.S. government disinformation people to do this dirty work, they sure are missing a great opportunity for funding.

Marc Sapir, M.D., M.P.H.I
Berkeley, California

To Whom It May Concern:

In the October 2002 *Commemorator*, there was an article stating in relevant part that Ruchell Magee was transferred from Pelican Bay State Prison to another Level IV prison at Corcoran. The article went on to inadvertently expose the current "classification custody points system" that purportedly authorized prison officials to transfer Ruchell from one maximum-security prison to another, as opposed to level III Mulecreek (which happens to be less restrictive than Pelican Bay and Corcoran).

When Ruchell was at Pelican Bay, the Board of Prison Terms (BPT) and State Senator Gwynnae Byrd told him that the term-fixing mandate of PC 1170.2 did not apply to lifers. However, this was misinformation because according to PC Section 3065, the parole provisions of PC 1170.2 apply to all lifers who were incarcerated in California prisons on July 1, 1977.

The custody point system is a hoax that was devised by the Department of Corrections (CDOC) to shuffle prisoners from prison to prison and avoid complying with the "time credit" reduction mandate of California Penal Code (PC) Sections 2931-33. According to the statute, all prisoners sentenced under the Indeterminate Sentencing Law (ISL) are qualified to earn four months off of their sentence for every eight months served. Three months of

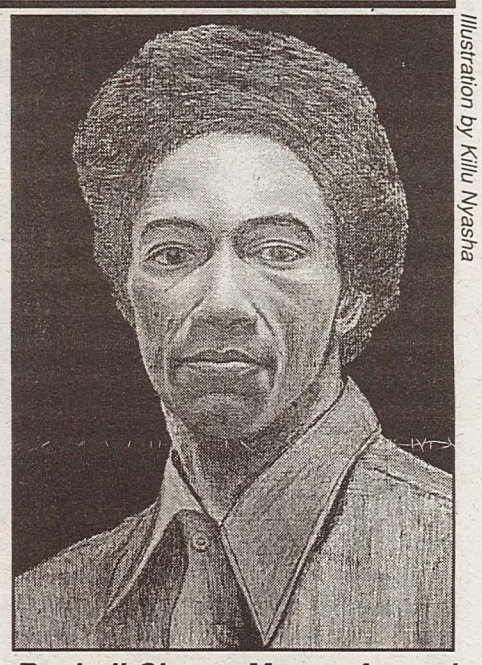

Illustration by Kililu Nyasha

Ruchell Cinque Magee, framed and held captive over 40 years.

this reduction is supposed to be based upon forbearance from any acts for which a prisoner could be prosecuted in a court of law, or behavior described as a serious disciplinary infraction by the CDOC. The fourth month of the reduction is based solely upon participation in a work or educational program, if available.

In 1983 the issue of whether prisoners sentenced under the ISL were eligible to earn work and good time credits was litigated in the case of In re Monigold 188 Cal.Rptr 698. The Monigold Court emphatically ruled that under subdivision (e) of CPC 1170.2, all lifers are entitled to a release date and were therefore qualified to receive work and good time credits after serving their minimum life term.

When Ruchell was at Pelican Bay, the Board of Prison Terms (BPT) and State Senator Gwynnae Byrd told him that the term-fixing mandate of PC 1170.2 did not apply to lifers.

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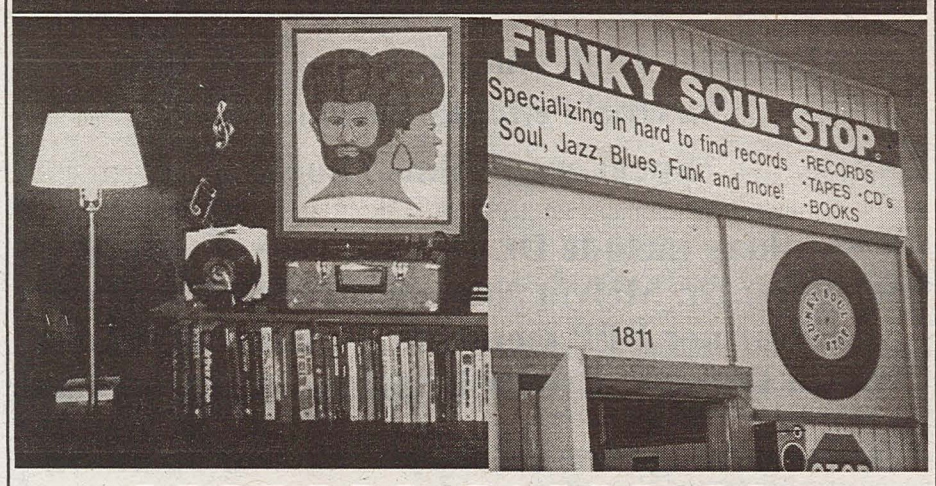
FUNKY SOUL STOP



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Letter to Editor

Continued from page 9

However, this was misinformation because according to PC Section 3065, the parole provisions of PC 1170.2 apply to all lifers who were incarcerated in California prisons on July 1, 1977.

If the advocates for Ruchell would simply make a straightforward claim that he has a statutory right to a release date—as opposed to jaw-jackin' about whether the BPT should or should not find him suitable for parole because of some misplaced sense of fair play—they just may finally manage to secure Ruchell's release or discharge from the CDOC.

The impact of such a decision or victory would put an end to the "custody point" scam that enabled prison officials to transfer Ruchell to Corcoran.

Sincerely,

Colvin McCright, B-08892
P.O. Box 7500
Crescent City, CA 95532

California Penal Code Section 3065:

Except as otherwise provided in Section 1170.2 and Article 1 (commencing with Section 3000) of this chapter, the provisions of this Article are to apply to all prisoners serving sentence in the state prisons on July 1, 1977, to the end that at all times the same provisions relating to sentence, imprisonments and "paroles" of prisoners shall apply to all inmates thereof.

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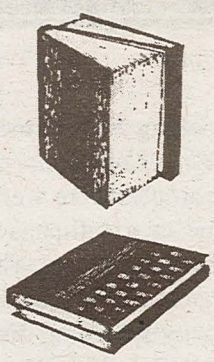
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Government's Response/BPP

Continued from page 7

FBI Declares War on Panthers: COINTELPRO

Within one year of the formation of the Party, the FBI formed a special counterintelligence program dubbed COINTELPRO.[29] The purpose of this program was, in the FBI's own words, to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or to otherwise neutralize the activities of the Black nationalist."[30] A specific purpose of COINTELPRO was to prevent the rise of a "Messiah," a charismatic Black leader who might "unify and electrify" Black people.[31] Martin Luther King, Jr., was named as a potential Messiah in the FBI's own secret memorandum establishing COINTELPRO, but, after the assassination of King in 1968, the FBI shifted its focus to the Party and its leadership, particularly Huey P. Newton.

J. Edgar Hoover, then Director of the FBI, publicly stated that the Party constituted "the greatest threat to the internal security of the country…" of any organization.[32] Of the 295 documented actions taken by COINTELPRO alone to disrupt Black groups, 233 (79%) were specifically directed toward destruction of the Party.[33] Over $100 million of taxpayers' money was expended for COINTELPRO, over $7 million of it allocated for 1976 alone to pay off informants and provocateurs, twice the amount allocated in the same period by the FBI to pay organized crime informants.[34]

Indeed, while COINTELPRO ostensibly targeted five domestic organizations—which the Bureau dubbed, the communist Party, the Socialist Workers' Party, "White House Hate Groups", Black Nationalist Hate Groups (e.g., the Panthers), and the "New Left"—it was Blacks, and the Panthers in particular, who received the brunt of the damage. As the Senate Select Committee To Study Governmental Operations found,

> The white Hate COINTELPRO also used comparatively few techniques which carried a risk of serious physical, emotional, or economic damage to the targets, while the Black Nationalist COINTELPRO used such techniques extensively.[35]

The vast arsenal of techniques employed by the Bureau against the BPP were tried and tested over the years in foreign espionage. As William C. Sullivan, former Assistant to the Director, stated,

> "This is a rough, tough, dirty business, and dangerous. It was dangerous at times, No holds were barred….We have used [these techniques], against Soviet agents. They have used [them] against us….[The same methods were] brought home against any organization against which we were targeted. We did not differentiate. This is a rough, tough business."[36]

Specifically, the FBI engaged in or encouraged a variety of actions intended to cause, and in fact causing, deaths of BPP members, loss of membership and community support, draining of revenues from the Party, false arrests of members and supporters, and defamatory discrediting of constructive Party programs and leaders. What follows is an illustrative highlighting of some of these unlawful actions undertaken by the Bureau against the BPP.

Creating Dissension within the Panthers

On Snitch-Jackets, Provocateurs, Bad Media and Other Techniques

A major goal of COINTELPRO was to sow dissension within the Party. A 1970 memorandum from Headquarters to the San Francisco field office of the FBI, for example, proposed:

> "A wide variety of alleged authentic police or FBI material could be carefully selected or prepared for furnishing to the Panthers. Reports, blind memoranda, LHM's [Letterhead Memorandums] and other alleged police or FBI documents could be prepared pinpointing Panthers as police or FBI informants: ridiculing or discrediting Panther leaders through their ineptness or personal escapades; espousing personal philosophies and promoting factionalism among BPP members; indicating electronic coverage where none exists; outlining fictitious plans for police raids or other counteractions; revealing misuse or misappropriation of Panther funds, pointing out instances of political disruptive material and disinformation; etc. The nature of the disruptive material and disinformation "leaked" would only be limited by the collection ability of your sources and the need to insure the protection of their security."

Effective implementation of this proposal could not help but disrupt and confuse Panther activities. Even if they were to suspect FBI or police involvement, they would be unable to ignore factual material brought to their attention through this channel. The operation would afford us a continuing means to furnish the Panther leadership true information which is to our interest that they know and disinformation which, in their interest, they cannot ignore.[37]

Obviously, falsely labeling people as informants in any organization carries with it a serious potential risk to the reputation and, in some situations, safety of that person. This is especially true if the combined counterintelligence techniques employed convince the organization that their friends have been imprisoned or harmed because of the "targeting" informant. Fully aware of this obvious fact, the Bureau nonetheless rationalized the placing of "snitch-jackets" on innocent people:

> You have to be able to make decisions and I am sure that labeling somebody as an informant, that you'd want to make certain that it served a good purpose before you did it and not do it haphazardly….It is a serious thing….As far as I am aware, in the Black extremist area, by using the technique, no one was killed. I am sure of that.[38]

When asked whether the absence of any deaths was the result of "luck or planning", this same Bureau official, George C. Moore, then Chief of the Racial Intelligence Section, answered, "Oh, it just happened that way, I am sure."[39] The certitude of Moore's assertion is unfortunately belied by the Bureau's own confidential memoranda, more than one of which claimed that the Party murdered "members it suspected of being police informants."[40] Indeed, the FBI worked closely with Connecticut authorities in trying to convict two Party leaders, Bobby Seale and Ericka Huggins, of conspiracy to murder Alex Rackley, an alleged informant. Seale and Huggins were not convicted, but the government's chief witness against them, the person who admittedly participated in Rackley's killing, appears from facts disclosed during and after the trial to have been an agent or informant. At the very least, this person's immediate enrollment in the Ivy League institution after the murder trial and subsequent employment by the administration of an eastern university raises serious questions.[41]

In any event, the use of "snitch-jackets" by the Bureau was widespread. The Senate Select Committee reports several instances of this technique without any apparent follow-up as to the consequences to the persons wrongly jacketed. Among the instances cited was one in San Diego where:

> A Black Panther leader was arrested by the local police with four other members of the BPP. The others were released, but the leader remained in custody. Headquarters authorized the field office to circulate the rumor that the leader "is the last to be released" because "]Department to furnish them information concerning the BPP." The Target of the first proposal then received an anonymous phone call stating that his own arrest was caused by a rival leader.[42]

Black Panther Archives

1968 witnessed the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Li'l Bobby Hutton. BPP's impact rose to its apex. At the same time, the infamous J. Edgar Hoover's FBI, COINTELPRO (counter intelligence program) was unleashed by the U.S. government upon the movement. While other activist groups were targeted, BPP was the bull's-eye. Out of a total of 295 attacks, 233, or (79%), were against the BPP. The Free Huey Movement put into motion a revolutionary militancy unprecedented in the U.S. This militance influenced the civil rights, peace and labor movements.

FOOTNOTES:

[24] *Epstein, Agency of Fear, p. 252.*

[25] *Ibid., pp. 201-202, 207.*

[26] *Ibid., pp. 213-215.*

[27] *Ibid., p. 214*

[28] *Statement and presentation of OCCIB document by Sheldon Otis, attorney for Huey Newton, at August 15, 1977, hearing in People v. Newton, No. 64624A and No. 65919, Alameda Mun. Ct., Oakland, California.*

[29] *COINTELPRO, a bureau acronym for "counterintelligence program", was first formally launched in 1956 against the Communist Party, U.S.A. The Black Nationalist COINTELPRO began in 1967 and focused on the BPP. Book III: Final Report, pp. 15-20*

Continued on page 16

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Conversation with Mumia

Continued from page 3

handcuffed and locked behind a thick, Plexiglas window, Mumia Abu-Jamal stood waiting for us.

Mumia stood tall in his prison-issued bright orange coveralls. Immediately he radiated all of the strength and courage I expected to experience while in his company. He smiled and greeted us through the glass and our visit began.

At first, our conversation edged along slowly as we established a rapport with one another. Soon, however, we engaged as if we were lifelong friends. We talked about politics, religion, globalization, slavery and its not-so-subtle transformation into the Prison Industrial Complex, the stolen 2000 Presidential Election, the Bush family and their connection to the Nazis during World War II and after. We discussed sweatshops, corporate greed, Nike and its exploitation of the African-American community, my family, his family, my friend Lisa's family, Iraq, the Twin Towers, Osama bin Laden, the CIA, the FBI… and the list goes on.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is better read than anyone I have ever met. He knows enough to be able to educate even the most highly regarded of intellectuals and academics. He is funny, animated, loving, compassionate and sincere in his interest of others. There is no question in my mind as to why he's a threat to the system that incarcerates him. He is the classic COINTELPRO candidate. Too much knowledge is dangerous for the powers that be and the agenda they serve. When that knowledge is combined with a tenacious love of Justice, Truth, and Humanity, it becomes lethal. Such is the immense power of Mumia Abu-Jamal. The bars and the cell that have "imprisoned" him over the last 20 years have achieved quite the contrary. In many ways he is freer than most, including myself. Somehow he is able to transcend his hellish environment, liberating his mind and soul from incarceration. I am saying this not to imply that we need not worry about working to ensure his release—absolutely not! My point is that we need him out here, with us, and so does his family. He needs a fair trial and we need to make sure that this happens.

In 1999 the confessed killer of Officer Faulkner came forward and gave a detailed account of his involvement in the 1982 shooting, signing an affidavit and passing a lie detector test. In August of 2002 Mumia's attorney's filed an appeal for the supreme court to hear Beverly's confession. Human rights lawyers claimed that 'international Human Rights law requires the Pennsylvania courts to hear the evidence which proves that Jamal is innocent including the confession of Arnold Beverly." Mumia however is still on death row. Apparently in the 'land of the free,' innocence is no defense.

Judge Sabo, a long-standing member of The Fraternal Order of Police and the judge assigned to Mumia's case, should never have been allowed to try the case because of an obvious conflict of interest. Judge Sabo has sentenced more men to death than any other judge in this country. Of the 31 men sentenced to death by Sabo, 29 were Black or other minorities, two were white.

During his trial, Mumia was barred from the courtroom because his dreadlocks were considered to be "too intimidating" to the jurors. Of the jurors, only two were Black, and by the end of the trial only one Black person remained on the jury. Mumia's defense lawyer was denied critical funds necessary to try a capital case; eyewitnesses were threatened with incarceration if they testified. Lastly, crucial ballistic evidence proving Mumia's gun was not the gun that killed or even shot officer Faulkner was withheld during the trial. All appeals for a new trial have been ignored. Judge Sabo has denied all appeals for a fair trial. Mumia's attorneys filed a *Habeas Corpus* petition, after which a federal judge ordered a stay of execution.

Mumia has lived in the face of death for over 20 years. He is still alive thanks to the recognition his case has received from supporters all over the world, from Oakland to London to Cuba. It is imperative that this support continues not only until Mumia is free, but also until we are all free.

The system in place is not designed with people's interests in mind. This is evident in the disappearance of our civil liberties, which are being stripped from us everyday. One only has to look at the 2000 presidential "election." Thousands of individuals had their right to vote taken away from them. Names mysteriously disappeared from the ballots, and thousands of votes were not even counted. The "election" was stolen and we are now robbed of our rights daily.

When our visiting time with Mumia was up we said our goodbyes. The guard was surprisingly kind and gave us space to take our time. We walked past the cubicle next to Mumia's and sent our love to the family members of those we had befriended in the waiting room. He is a young African-American man about 30-years old, and another perfect example of the dangers of being black in the wrong place at the wrong time.

My heart definitely felt heavy as I vacated the prison. However, at the same time I felt invigorated. The human spirit cannot be caged, and that is clear in the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal. In my mind he soars with the eagles. I eagerly await his release so that he can experience the physicality of freedom. FREE MUMIA! FREE LEONARD PELTIER! FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!

Mumia: Haitian Struggle

Continued from page 3

revolution in America, he rose to leadership through a bloody terror, which contrived a Negro "problem" for the Western Hemisphere, intensified and defined the anti-slavery movement, became one of the causes, "and probably the prime one", which lead Napoleon to sell Louisiana for a song, and finally, through the interworking of all these efforts, rendered more certain the final prohibition of the slave-trade by the United States in 1807. [p. 70]

The grandsons and granddaughters of the 'Great Toussaint' are now the subject of mass media demonization in every report on Haiti. They are projected as the permanent 'Other', those strange folk who believe in a strange religion, the very name of which has been the synonym for weirdness (remember Bush I's rant about "voodoo economics"?).

When they arrive on the shores of the nation that their ancestors helped free, they are thrown into Krome Correctional facility, or hauled back into the hells of a Haiti that has been economically choked to death.

Yet, the images haunt us, for they tell us how we are perceived in the eyes of our cousins.

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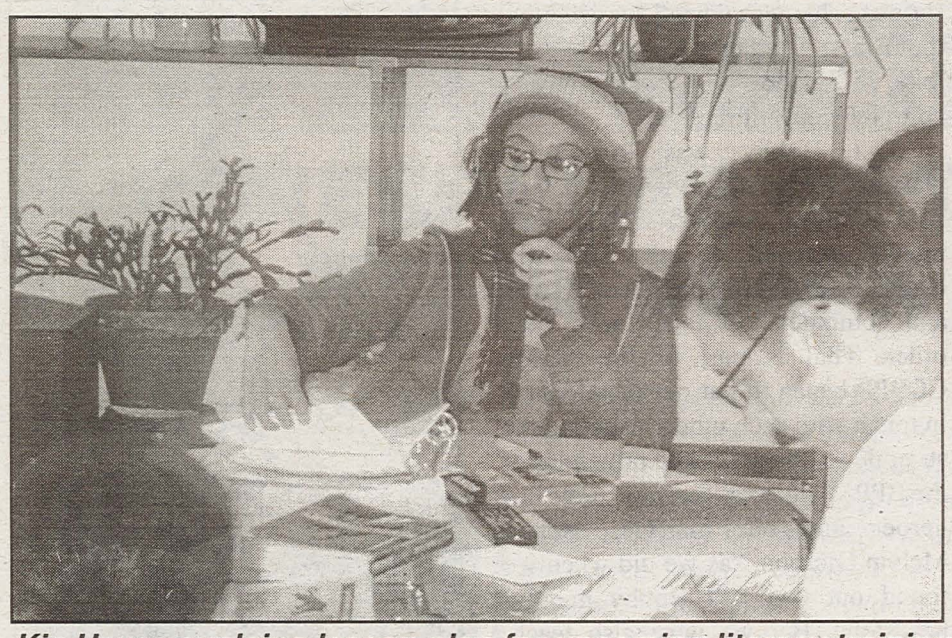
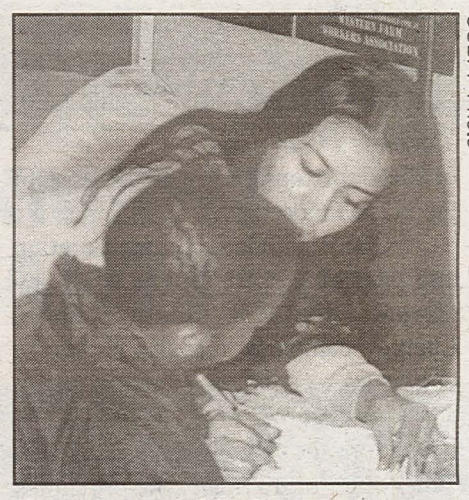


CCBPP Photo

Kia Hayes explains lesson plan for upcoming literacy training session to volunteer tutor Thomas Fiori.

CCBPP Photo

Bernadette Ja'Net assists Amaris at literacy session.



CCBPP Photo

Suemyra Shah, volunteer tutor, teaches writing as part of the Literacy Campaign.

Literacy Update

Continued from page 1

Cuba, so we can apply the techniques directly to training potential tutors here," stated Kia Hayes, Literary Program coordinator and lead tutor. Hayes' main job is to supervise the quality of the education and oversee the on-the-job training method the program has adopted. Through weekly community outreach to introduce and sign people up to CCBPP, and literacy information tables in various Oakland and Berkeley neighborhoods, volunteers have embraced a call to fight illiteracy. At the same time, weekly classes address the root causes of poverty that have for generations plagued the low-income communities, especially the African-American peoples.

"We still need books for beginners, primers. We are always in need of both committed tutors and learners for our program," stated Hayes. Tutors are trained in the fundamentals of teaching a person how to read and write. Both tutors and learners also have the opportunity to improve their communication skills and political knowledge through organizing in the community with CCBPP; they gain more experience in speaking, reading and writing through the phoning sessions to those met on our outreach, and through talking with people on our weekly literature tables and canvasses of homes and businesses in the local community. "We also encourage our tutors and learners to work on *The Commemorator* newspaper. By working on the newspaper, learners have the unique opportunity of reinforcing literacy skills learned during tutoring sessions," continued Hayes.

Campaign began October 2001

In October 2001, volunteer organizers for the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party kicked off the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign. Volunteers canvassed West Oakland neighborhoods to inform and excite people about the campaign and build enthusiasm for it. Out of a population of 395,000 people, 85,000 Oakland adults are functionally illiterate and cannot read above a ninth grade level, according to a study compiled by Literacy Volunteers of America and the Laubach Literacy Action.

"CCBPP volunteer campaign organizers hold the position that this percentage is an outrage and unacceptable," stated Marlene Krohn, CCBPP board member, East Bay teacher, and human rights organizer.

Expanding Our Ranks of Volunteers and Learners

To expand the campaign, CCBPP needs additional volunteer staff members to help expand the outreach and speaking engagement campaign to recruit more tutors and learners. "Many young people who were not born during the era of the Black Panther Party and Li'l Bobby Hutton need to understand the legacy of struggle. They need to understand that the struggle is not over," stated Krohn. "Our Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign is one aspect of continuing to advance that struggle. People not only learn and teach literacy, but we expose and explain the systems that government institutions practice. We expose policies of negligence, exploitation and oppression against people of color, and how these policies create and contribute to the high percentage of African-American males living in poverty and desperation. This is no accident and we help make an analysis towards progressive action for change, based on data and history."

Organizers state that one of the main points of the campaign is to get across in the neighborhoods the idea of self-empowerment for the benefit of all. "Despite poverty and social discrimination, Li'l Bobby taught himself to read," added Dickson. "He joined with the Black Panther Party to fight to eliminate poverty and discrimination everywhere. Li'l Bobby had 'a calling' just as other organizers and revolutionaries of the era had callings."

Illiteracy is a disease the power structure inflicts on our community. Our people need to understand that they should attach no shame to this disease. But we all need to work together to eradicate the disease as one aspect of building a strong community able to effectively exercise power. Representatives of the campaign also explain why poverty, illiteracy, and police brutality are all parts of the same problem and that they are unacceptable, just as poverty, illiteracy, and police brutality were unacceptable to the Blank Panther Party in 1967.

Representatives of the campaign also explain how and why today's demographics have changed: we now have over 8,000 Black elected officials, more Black youth in prison than in schools, and AIDS and tuberculosis are on the rise across the land (especially in low-income communities everywhere). Organizers explain how and why the government orchestrates the destruction of progressive programs and organizations, including the destruction of the Black Panther Party.

Campaign organizers explain that 40 years ago in the same West Oakland community, homelessness was unnoticeable. The employment rate was high largely due to active shipyard employment, and real estate prices were significantly lower than today's housing prices. West Oakland was an area populated over 90% by African-Americans, with many families being homeowners. Today, due to job losses for the next generations and government urban removal programs, unemployment and homelessness are very high. We also have many different ethnic and racial groupings living in the community with the influx of immigrants relocated to the Bay Area. About 70% of the West Oakland population is African-American, according to US Census reports (1995).

Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign is One Part of a Survival Kit

"We hope our youth and others will begin to grasp the significance of the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign and *The Commemorator* newspaper," CCBPP publisher and Chairman Melvin Dickson added. "Just as *The Commemorator* newspaper, sponsored by the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party, condemns the murder of black and oppressed peoples across this land, police brutality, and supports the freedom of all political prisoners held captive by the United States Prison Industrial Complex, so does the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign promote the same principles and goals through organizing and providing positive programs to serve the community."

Volunteers Needed to Address the Solution

Through volunteering to produce *The Commemorator*, volunteer- tutors and students learn copy editing, desktop design, and various methods of effective outreach in the community. The program is always in need of tutors who speak languages other than English. "Within our diverse working class and poor communities, many people speak Spanish and a variety of Asian languages. In order to effectively address the cycle of poverty and illiteracy, we must be prepared to meet the ever-changing needs of our ever-changing community," states Hayes.

In the 1960s and 70s, the local community make-up was largely a working class African-American community. Today, the San Francisco East Bay's racial and cultural make-up is increasingly diverse. Africans, Mexican, Asians, Middle Easterners, and Europeans have added to an

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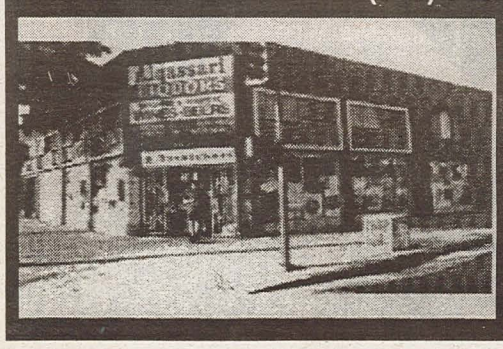

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Hutton Headstone

Continued from page 1

of the donations to cover the cost of the grave marker.

CCBPP is also commemorating and honoring Li'l Bobby's legacy through the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy campaign (see lead story in this issue).

The Education campaign is based on the Black Panther Party Ten-Point Program, and the principles of Revolutionary Intercommunalism as put forth by Dr. Huey P. Newton. At the tender age of 15, Li'l Bobby was the first member to join the BPP 36 years ago, after co-founders Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. He quickly took on the role of the Party's National Treasurer. In May 1967, when Bobby Seale led a delegation of 30 BPP members to the California State Capitol in Sacramento, Li'l Bobby demonstrated his revolutionary leadership by walking out in the front of the delegation. He was arrested along with all the other members but, due to his youth, was incarcerated in the juvenile facility. Li'l Bobby was mature beyond his years and was well respected by Party members.

On April 6, 1968, at the age of 17, Li'l Bobby was gunned down in cold blood like a dog by members of the Oakland Police Department, in the view of West Oakland residents.

The former BPP Minister of Culture, Emory Douglas, paid tribute to Li'l Bobby on April 28, 2001 at the Li'l Bobby Hutton Commemoration Day stating, "He was young and energetic like any youth, but when it came down to taking care of business, Li'l Bobby was out front, standing tall."

Li'l Bobby gave his life to end poverty, discrimination and police brutality in the Oakland black ghetto, nationally and worldwide. Yet today we still have a high percentage of young black males murdered, in prison and/or living under the control of the criminal injustice system throughout the country, not the least of which is in Oakland, where the Black Panther Party began its revolutionary thrust.

According to CCBPP founder Melvin Dickson, "Li'l Bobby would not be pleased with the living conditions our people face today. If he could see the murdering going down in his neighborhoods, the hopelessness among his people, Li'l Bobby would be out there teaching that the system of capitalist genocide has brought that hopelessness down upon an increasing number of our people not only in the US but throughout the world. Just like Dr. Huey P. Newton, Fred Hampton, George Jackson and other revolutionaries, he gave his life for our people. The struggle is not over. Li'l Bobby never gave up. If he were alive today, I am sure he would still be fighting for the revolution with all of his being."

"Li'l Bobby Hutton, who loved his people deeply, continues to inspire the cause for justice here and around the world. To truly commemorate Li'l Bobby one must fight the root cause of the oppression affecting tens and hundreds of millions of people who face genocidal conditions throughout the world; for Li'l Bobby's fight represents the class interests of all poor and oppressed peoples fighting against the forces of monopoly capitalism that are reaching into almost every sector of society to forcibly seize everything they can get their hands on," stated Dickson.

"Li'l Bobby was a very courageous brother," stated Bobby Coleman, a former member of BPP who currently volunteers as *The Commemorator* Sponsorship coordinator. "I remember one time we got stopped by the police: me, Reggie Forte, Sherwin Forte, and Arthur Williams (Hawk). Li'l Bobby was the first person to get out of the car and confront the police and asked them why did the police stop us. (We hadn't violated or broken any laws). What did Li'l Bobby do? He stood up for his rights and told the police officer, 'you have no right to stop us for no reason!' The expression on Li'l Bobby's face told you that he was very serious. That was when I realized that the Black Panther Party was not a joke. Li'l Bobby was always dedicated to the goals of the Party."

Li'l Bobby was buried in Oakland's Mountain View Cemetery. And as the years passed (and family members passed) and the BPP officially ended, family members, friends and comrades lost touch with each other. That is part of the reason CCBPP began to put our people back in touch with each other, resuming the struggle for the goals and principles of the BPP. "We must commemorate our heroes and our martyrs," stated Melvin Dickson, "as we did when we found out that Li'l Bobby had no headstone. But we must also teach, organize and bring forth a new generation of leaders who can help carry forward this struggle to revolutionary victory."

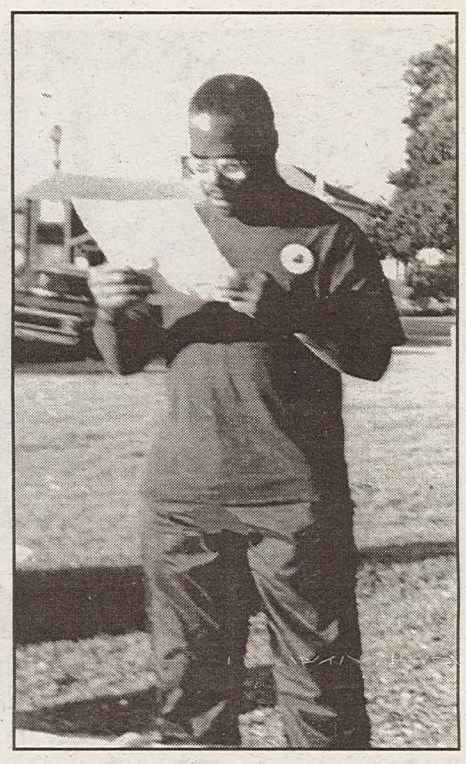
Robert Flannigan, CCBPP volunteer and a student with the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign, wrote the following poem:

Li'l Bobby was killed
He was killed in 1968
He was a Panther.
He was a strong person. He fought for his rights
He talked to his community.
He had meetings about
The people on the streets.
He wanted to help people.
He wanted to organize black people on the streets to fight oppression
He wanted them to learn to read.
He taught himself to read.
Li'l Bobby was brave!

We organize dialectically based on the reality (the materialism) of our oppression. We have to bring together the many to defeat monopoly capitalism, to defeat the few who benefit from our exploitation and oppression, together in solidarity, to eliminate, once and for all the destructive system of blood-sucking monopoly capitalism. It is not unique to the ghetto of West Oakland, California. It is not unique to the ghetto of Cincinnati. It is not unique to the poor community of South Africa, to the poor community of Haiti, and the poor community of Colombia, nor the poor community of Mexico or Yugoslavia. That is why a part of our method is to study the world while changing it, and as Huey used to point out, you can't change a part without changing the whole.

To find out more about our effort, please take the opportunity to call or stop by the office of Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party. Our phone number is (510) 652-7170.

All power to the People!



CCBPP Photo

Robert Flanigan, Learner with the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign, reads his poem during celebration.

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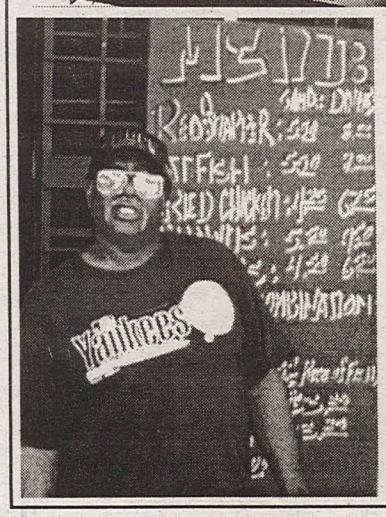

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History Repeating?

Continued from page 2

Courtesy of Pierre LaBossiere

The masses stood for the more than 60% of Haiti's voting population that elected Jean-Bertrand Aristide president in 2001.

model for development, so they forced Haiti into debt to pay for its independence. It took one hundred years to pay off this debt, and by then, other debts had accumulated, so it's said that Haiti still owes, that it's a "debtor nation."

'Structural Adjustment' Places Stranglehold on Haiti

The plans of the United States and Europe for Haiti have not changed for the past 200 years. One percent of U.S. aid goes to agriculture in a country that is 75% rural. In 1971 the United States allowed Baby Doc Duvalier to succeed his father, Papa Doc, without holding elections, in exchange for economic incentives, which included the establishment of maquila industrial zones to guarantee cheap labor, and lowered tariffs on imports, policies now part of the structural adjustment programs of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

After Aristide was forced from power in 1991, the Haitian military dictatorship agreed to lower tariffs on imported rice, so now Haiti imports 75% of its rice from the United States, when 15 years ago, Haiti grew 90% of its own crop. World Bank and IMF structural adjustment policies forbid that Haiti should subsidize her farmers, or protect her rice market with tariffs, but in 2002 George W. Bush signed into law tariffs to protect U.S. steel companies, and a multi-billion dollar agricultural bill that, among other things, will subsidize big American rice farmers to drive small Haitian rice farmers out of business.

These structural adjustment policies force rural Haitians off the land, like small farmers all over the developing world, and into cities, sweatshops, and the informal economy of street vending, drugs, prostitution, and petty crime. These policies force the privatization of any public services that could offer support to people, so you can't see a doctor, or go to school, or even drink clean water unless you can pay for it in cold hard cash, which you can't do, because it doesn't even pay to grow your own food.

The Inter-American Development Bank has still not disbursed a loan that was approved two years ago to fund these very services, although Haiti has been paying interest on the loan since signing the agreement. The population that would benefit most from this loan is the very same population that votes overwhelmingly for President Aristide every chance it gets.

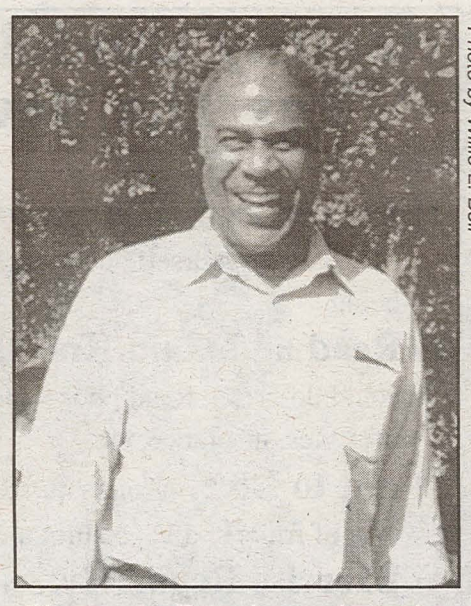


Photo by Willie L. Bell

Pierre LaBossiere, longtime Haitian American activist, urges members of the Bay Area community to support the democratically elected government of Haiti.

Genocide in Haiti

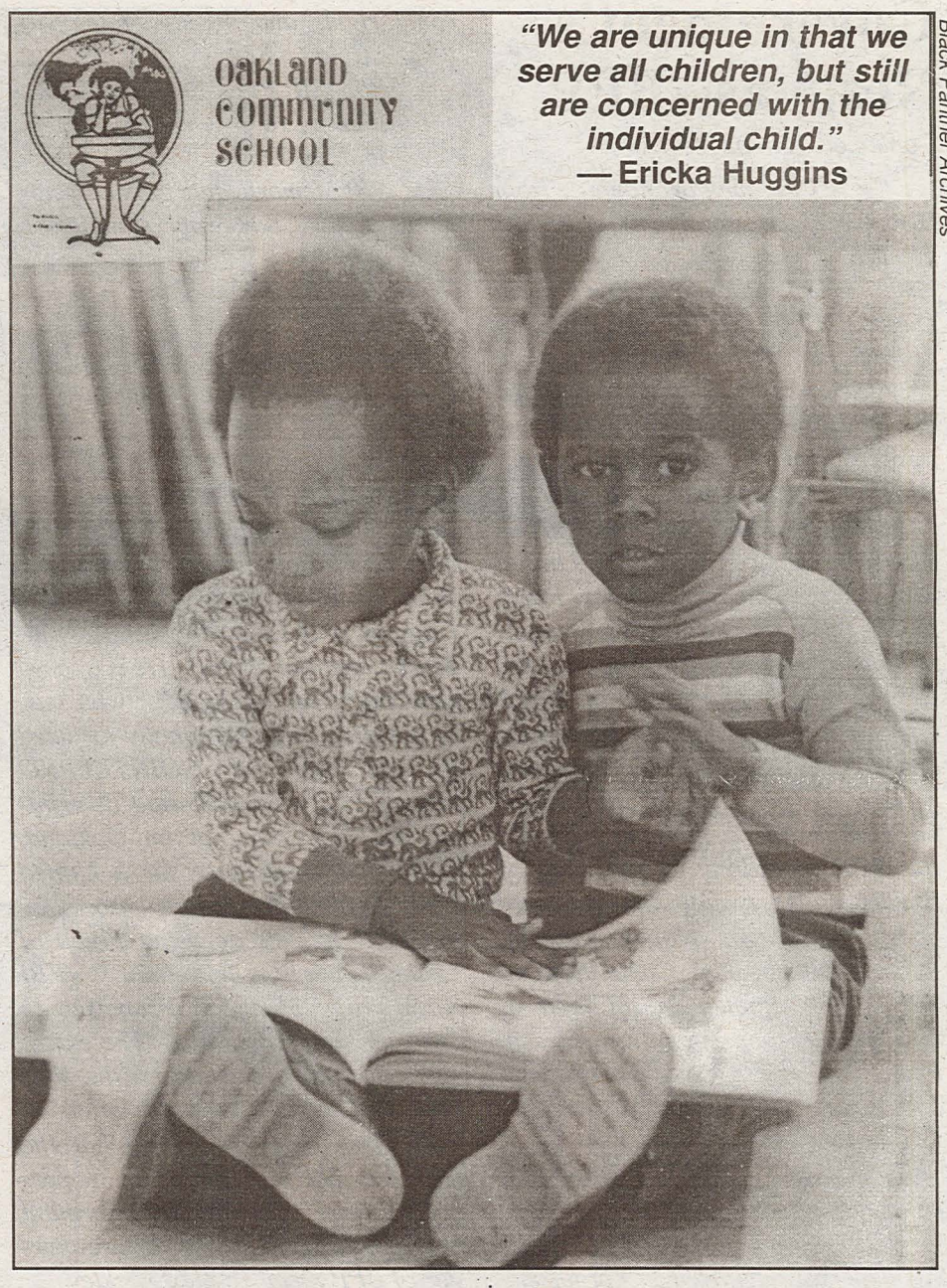
What we are seeing here is a form of genocide – the destruction of the ability of rural Haitians to feed and support themselves. The genocidal effects of this process also attack social cohesion and culture as these policies literally starve people into unstable lives of economic desperation. That is why Haiti is called a "debtor nation" – it is FORCED to borrow, because it's prevented from feeding and supporting its own people, and has been since 1804.

Now is the time to learn the lessons of history and change its course. We understand what the World Bank is doing, and the International Monetary Fund, and the Treasury Department and the State Department, and the Inter-American Dialogue. We have been here before!!! They don't like the politics of the man Haiti has chosen to be its president, so they're trying to figure out how to discredit him, and who to put in his place.

'Let Haiti Live'

That is why the Haiti Action Committee has formed, and why we are part of a national campaign called "Let Haiti Live." We work in the community to raise awareness about Haiti, to support its democratically elected government, and to work for the passage of House Resolution 382, sponsored by Rep. Barbara Lee, to end the U.S. economic embargo against Haiti. We encourage you to join together with us.

For more information about the Haiti Action Committee, please call 510-483-7481, or email haitiaction@yahoo.com.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"We are unique in that we serve all children, but still are concerned with the individual child."
— Ericka Huggins

Black Panther Archives

During the 1970s and early 1980s, through its Oakland Community School, the BPP implemented point number five of its Ten-Point Platform where children learn literacy as well as how to think, not what to think.

Literacy Update

Continued from page 13

already racially diverse ethnic and cultural community.

Dr. Huey P. Newton and other visionaries spoke and wrote about the far-reaching changes destined to come to the communities of the world demographically, as well as the changes in the patterns of production. "Today's capitalist has developed machinery to such a point that he can hire a group of specialized people called technocrats. In the near future he will certainly do more of this, and the technocrat will be too specialized to be identified as a proletarian. In fact that group of technocrats will be so vital we will have to do something to explain the presence of other people" (Huey P. Newton, To Die For the People, Random House New York, page 29).

"We simply have to organize for power over our lives against an evil power structure that serves only the interest of the bourgeois ruling class that knows no limit to profits and control, causing misery of millions and tens of millions of human lives throughout the planet earth. We need tremendous participation and support in the fight to take power and control of our own lives from the clutches of an evil global system driven by the greed for profits by fewer and fewer people, and by the misery of more and more people," Dickson said.

Anyone interested in participating in the Li'l Bobby Hutton Literacy Campaign in any way — as a tutor, a learner, a driver, donating books or helping with financial sponsorship should call Kia Hayes at (510) 652-7170.

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Government's Response/BPP

Continued from page 11

[30] FBI memorandum from Director, Hqtrs., to all SAC's, August 25, 1967

[31] FBI Memorandum from Director, Hqtrs., to all SAC's, March 4, 1968, pp. 3-4.

[32] See n. 14. A major reason for the FBI Director's hostility toward the BPP was its popularity among Blacks, particularly the young. "The most active and dangerous Black extremist group in the United States is the Black Panther Party (BPP). Despite its relatively small number of hard-core members...the BPP is in the forefront of Black extremist activity today. Moreover, a recent poll indicates that approximately 25 per cent of the Black population has a great respect for the BPP including 43 per cent of Blacks under twenty-one years of age." J. Edgar Hoover, Special Report, Interagency Committee on Intelligence, quoted in affidavit of Sheldon Otis, attorney at law, filed in People v. Newton, Nos. 64624A and 65919, Alameda Mun. Ct., Oakland, California.

[33] Book III: Final Report, p. 188. Estimates of federal investigators vary, to wit: "During 1967-1971, FBI Headquarters approved 379 proposals for COINTELPRO actions against 'black nationalists." These operations utilized dangerous and unsavory techniques which gave rise to the risk of death and often disregarded the personal rights and dignity of the victims." (Ibid., p 88.)

[34] Book III: Final Report, p. 260.

[35] Ibid., p. 16.

[36] Ibid., p. 7.

[37] FBI Memorandum from Director, Hqtrs., to SAC, San Francisco, May 11, 1970.

[38] Book III: Final Report, p. 9.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Memorandum from FBI Hqtrs. to Cincinnati Field Office, February 18, 1971.

[41] Interview with Donald Freed on August 25, 1979. Freed is an author living in Los Angeles who has written, inter alia, Agony at New Haven: The Trial of Bobby Seale and Ericka Huggins and Executive Action (with Mark Lane and others). He is a longtime supporter of the BPP who has, as a result, been personally targeted by the FBI for COINTELPRO actions. For instance, the FBI printed and distributed at an Oakland, California Conference for a United Front Against Fascism, sponsored by the BPP, leaflets accusing Freed of "being a possible informant." (FBI Airtel from SAC, San Francisco to Director, July 28, 1969.) The extensive research Freed did on the New Haven, Connecticut prosecution of Seale and Huggins shows that the FBI was likely instrumental in promoting and assisting an informant who participated in the torture-murder of BPP member Alex Rackley.

[42] FBI Memorandum from San Diego Field Office to FBI Hqtrs., February 11, 1969; FBI Memorandum from FBI Hqtrs. to San Diego Field Office, February 19, 1969.

Healthy Guidelines For Living For The New Year 2003

1) **Prayer and Meditation.** This lends to a more disciplined life, faith in yourself and more attention to your overall well being.
2) **Read and Gain Knowledge.** If you knew better you could do better. Read books and articles on healthy foods, lifestyles, insurance, etc.
3) **Eat to Live.** Avoid saturated fried foods and salts. Eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day.
4) **Exercise Regularly.** 5 times a week, 30 minutes per session. Walk to work, school, or to the store. Get on an exercise bike.
5) **Rid yourself of addictions.** Smoking, Cocaine, Alcohol, etc.
6) **Get enough rest and relaxation.** You do need 8 hours of sleep a day.
7) **Commune with nature.** Enjoy the trees, heaven, sky, water, grass, air and wind.
8) **Get your regular yearly check ups.** Lab tests to obtain include HIV Test, glucose, cholestorol, hepatitis, Electrolytes, Blood count, Pap smear, Mammogram, prostate evaluation, heart testing, colon testing, etc. See your health care provider yearly.

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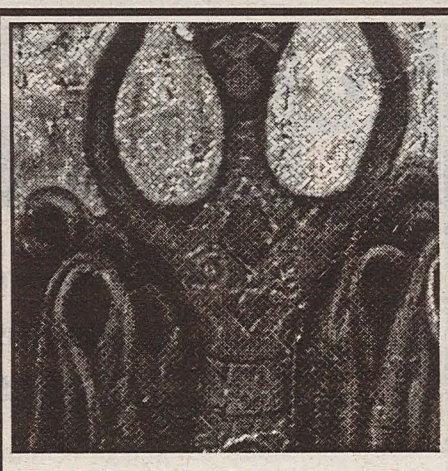

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dark mother: african origins and godmothers (iUniverse - January 2002)

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AIDS in Africa: New Plague or Old Illnesses of Poverty?

Racist HIV Myth Hides Ruthless U.S. Exploitation.

Unlike in the United States, AIDS in Africa is most frequently diagnosed based on four very imprecise clinical symptoms—diarrhea, fever, persistent cough, and weight loss greater than 10% over two months. *HIV antibody tests are not required to diagnose a case of African AIDS.* These four clinical symptoms are identical to the problems created by conditions of poverty that have troubled Africa and other developing areas of the world for centuries. In fact, symptoms of the so-called African AIDS epidemic are indistinguishable from the effects of malnutrition, unsanitary drinking and bathing water, and common curable conditions like malaria, cholera, tuberculosis, and parasitic infections.

Rather than solve the problems of African poverty caused by centuries of ruthless Western exploitation, the U.S. government insists on broadcasting the doomsday notion that Africa is suddenly gripped by a deadly, spreading sexual plague. According to these American health authorities, salvation from sickness can only be found in profitable pills manufactured by the white West and exported to black Africa.

America's Racist HIV Myth

The idea that AIDS originated in Africa is a popular myth without any scientific or epidemiological evidence. News reports that blame AIDS on African green monkeys are based upon elaborate speculation about species-jumping viruses rather than reliable proof. Tall tales about the spread of AIDS are promoted through the most vulgar and racist sexual stereotypes about promiscuous African people.

Still, the numbers speak for themselves. According to the 1999 *WHO Global HIV/AIDS Report,* the total number of AIDS cases in Africa virtually equals the total number of cases in America even though Africa, with its 650 million citizens, has more than two times the population of the United States. Africa is often cited as a worst case example of what could happen in America despite figures demonstrating that 99.5% of Africans do not have AIDS, and among Africans who test HIV positive, 97% do not have AIDS.

The Truth About African AIDS:

- **HIV antibody tests are not required for an AIDS diagnosis in Africa.**
- **African AIDS is diagnosed by four very imprecise clinical symptoms:**
  - **— Diarrhea**
  - **— Fever**
  - **— Persistent cough**
  - **— Weight loss greater than 10% over two months**
- **Tuberculosis, malaria, and measles far outnumber cases of AIDS in Africa.**
- **AIDS is not the leading cause of illness or death in any African nation.**

While Africa is the frequent target of damaging AIDS media reports, the total number of cases on the continent is relatively small. For example, from 1981 through 1999 cumulative AIDS cases for South Africa, the area claimed hardest hit by HIV, were just 12,825.

Exporting Extermination: AIDS Pills Kill!

It is undeniable that experimental AIDS treatments like protease inhibitors and AZT are all highly toxic, dangerous products. Strokes, muscle wasting, anemia, physical deformities, dementia, birth defects, organ failure, and death are some of the "side effects" of these poisons. Thousands of gay men in the 1980s and 1990s died from AZT poisoning. Now the U.S. State Department has elevated AIDS to the level of a threat to national security in order to gain public support for exporting AZT to pregnant African women. Outspoken leaders like South African President Thabo Mbeki—hard pressed to explain why developing nations stricken with famine and civil chaos should spend what little money they have on toxic anti-HIV drugs while millions starve—are relentlessly attacked as unfit and crazy by racist Western media outlets.

We invite you to investigate the growing international controversy over the cause and treatment of AIDS for yourself. Clip and mail the coupon below for a free copy of the groundbreaking book *What If Everything You Thought You Knew About AIDS Was Wrong?* by AIDS survivor Christine Maggiore.

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ACT UP San Francisco is the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power—a militant, direct action organization committed to ending the AIDS fraud. General body meetings are held every Monday night at 7:30 p.m. at 1884 Market Street and our medical marijuana dispensary is open 12:00 to 7:00 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. Get involved. Join ACT UP! End the abuse of AIDS.

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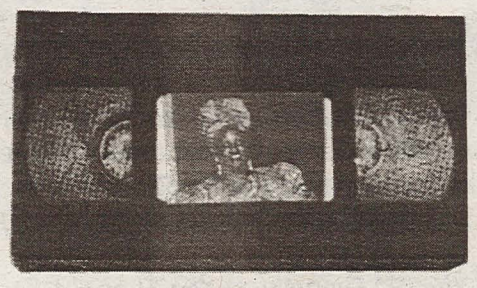

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Artist Corner: GinaHill/T.E.A.M.

Continued from page 8

to sneak in some time on the weekends.

Commemorator: Is your performance influenced by other artists? If so, who?

Gina Hill: My poetry got better when I got more into Hip-Hop. Various artists, who are conscious and are talking about something like COMMON, and Tupac, The rhythm really influenced me. Even drum rhythm. DEAD PREZ, I was about to give up on Hip-Hop, until they came out.

Commemorator: Do you see yourself as a performer, as an organizer, or a bit of both?

Gina Hill: I think of myself more as a facilitator, someone who brings people together. I facilitate action with youth. I facilitate, direct, and channel their energy, so it doesn't go wild and lose its focus. The youth are the ones who really inspire me. I convince them that what they are saying and trying to do isn't crazy. I give them self-esteem. When we formed T.E.A.M., it was about teaching each other about cultures, so we wouldn't be so ignorant. We performed at all of the cultural assemblies at Havenscourt.

Commemorator: What kind of movement (s) do you think will forward the ideals in your art?

Gina Hill: A very revolutionary movement. I think educational reform is another type of movement that will help people understand why T.E.A.M. needs to be supported. There are all kinds of educational opportunities out there. It seemed to me that the youth who live in the Flatlands were getting looked over. People do not come to recruit them for different educational programs where you can go out to the Sierras or Yosemite.

They don't ask them to come and apply to go to Brazil. They instead go to Berkeley and recruit — not in Oakland — not in the Flatlands. That's one of the reasons I was inspired to do this project. A friend of mine, Jane Jackson, was working to organize a sister city with Oakland and Santiago de Cuba. She knew I was a teacher and told me that the mayor of Santiago wanted a group of kids to come to the signing ceremony to establish the sister city and Jane said, "Why don't you bring the T.E.A.M. kids?" So we went in 2000 and have been going there ever since.

Commemorator: As a schoolteacher, by profession, what do you think about the Oakland School District's financial crisis? Why do you think the schools in the Flatlands are in their present condition?

Gina Hill: They're $60 million dollars in debt and have nothing to show for it. There is a lot of unnecessary spending. They spend too much money on external evaluators to come into schools to tell us why schools are failing. We know why our schools are failing. We don't need some idiot to come in and tell us and pay them 20, 40, $50,000 to write up a plan for us that is only going to stifle us.

If you are in a poor neighborhood, your school is going to reflect that. These neighborhoods are made-up of mostly immigrant populations, and African Americans. The country, as a whole, does not have an interest in helping these kids out. They want these kids for their menial labor jobs. They don't want them to become computer programmers, scientists, or becoming big things, they don't want that. Certain people are scared that these kids are going to come up and take over. I think it is partly racism, bias, and fear because people in power don't want to share. Our government does not care about these kids. All they care about is fat pockets and that is why the district is in the shape that it's in because it is so full of this type of bureaucracy.

Commemorator: Would you call your work a type of "guerilla theatre?"

Gina Hill: Yes, which we are trying to develop more of. We have a few pieces that we do, but we need to develop more. The kids need to warm up more to the concept because they are a little more self-conscious.

Commemorator: What are your long- term objectives for T.E. A. M., as well as your individual work?

Gina Hill: I want to be able to sustain myself and run the program full-time, and next year, in December, we are going to go to India. I want to continue to go to Cuba every year.

Commemorator: In your opinion, is there an artistic medium that best communicates political ideas?

Gina Hill: I think Hip-Hop is probably the best one. It's subliminal. The beat attracts people, regardless of what the words are saying and then eventually you wake up to what these people are saying. I keep thinking of COMMON, he does the story of Assata Shakur in one of his songs. I think it's an excellent form of education. I just wish that the youth would get into conscious Rap and not have to listen to KMEL because it comes in the clearest.

Commemorator: Do you think that artists have a responsibility to be political?

Gina Hill: I wish they were, but I don't think they are. I wish they would take the responsibility to be socially conscious and aware of the fact that they do have an effect on influencing young people. Artists do have a political responsibility whether they take it or not. By not acknowledging it, they add to the problem and help to create more social problems, upholding the status quo.

Commemorator: Do you think that our country values and supports art and education in all its forms?

Gina Hill: Hell no. Our country supports art only in the forms that it supports their agenda. The agenda is for the few that are in power, to remain rich and in power. They create the obstacles to make sure that you don't get in their way. It's not too far fetched that our government does have plans to maintain the current power structure, because without it, they won't be able to continue to live in such a lavish manner. We need to reorganize our priorities. Health and Education should be priorities and should be the most important things that our government supports and they don't. There is no reason that so many kids should be kids coming into High School struggling to read.

CCBPP STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP) is committed to the goals of the Black Panther Party (BPP) as outlined in its Ten-Point Program which was written in 1966 by Party founders, Dr. Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale.

The Ten-Point Program outlines goals and objectives toward changing conditions of economic exploitation and political oppression in all low-income and working class communities in the U.S. and elsewhere, as the basis for unity and solidarity.

Also, the CCBPP is committed to the concept of Revolutionary Intercommunalism, introduced by Dr. Newton in 1970 at Boston College. Our Revolutionary Intercommunalism holds that there are basically two sides. On one side there is reactionary intercommunalism which presently holds the world's low-income and working communities under conditions of economic exploitation and political oppression by controlling the wealth, resources and institutions in order to maximize profits for the few. Huey identified this side as the leading reactionary side (the ruling class) which consists of a minority, fewer than five percent of the world population. Under these conditions, reactionary intercommunalism, by and large, keeps the poor and working communities on a cycle of degradation, under conditions of reaction, desperation and poverty, with no end in sight. Newton understood that in order to change these conditions and advance the economic and cultural interests of these oppressed communities of the world, disciplined organizations must be built from the bottom up, enabling these low-income and working communities to fight exploitation and oppression by any means necessary (this fight needs to start in the advanced industrialized U.S. because our nation leads the world in political reaction and economic exploitation). CCBPP advances and upholds the goals which the BPP outlined in its Ten-Point Program, and those goals are about ridding black ghettos and low-income and working communities of economic exploitation and political oppression, understanding that we can reach these goals only by seizing the time at the point of practice.

Black Panther Party Ten-Point Program
WHAT WE WANT, WHAT WE BELIEVE

1. WE WANT FREEDOM, WE WANT POWER TO DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that Black and oppressed people will not be free until we are able to determine our destinies in our own communities ourselves, by fully controlling all the institutions that exist in our communities.

2. WE WANT FULL EMPLOYMENT FOR OUR PEOPLE. We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every person employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if the American businessmen will not give full employment, then the technology and means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all its people and give a high standard of living.

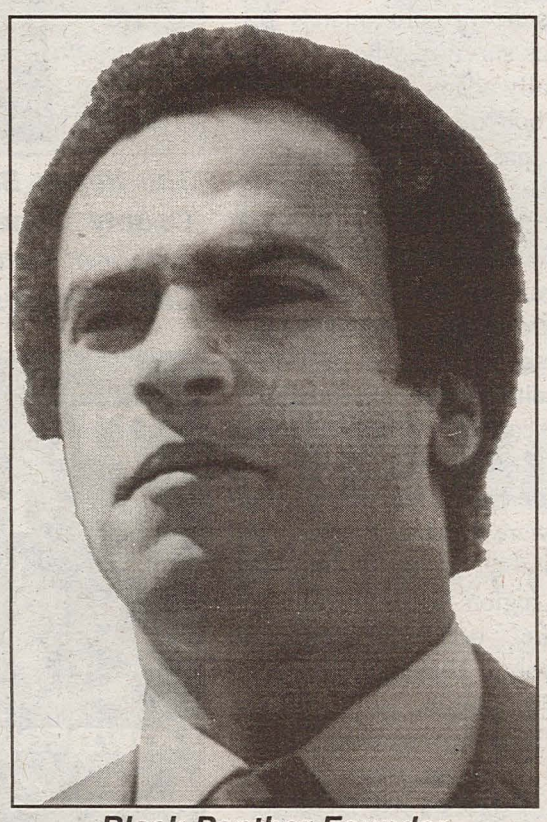
3. WE WANT AN END TO THE ROBBERY BY THE CAPITALIST OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that the racist government has robbed us and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules were promised 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of Black people. We will accept the payment in currency that will be distributed to our many communities. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifty million Black people. Therefore, we feel this is a modest demand that we make.

4. WE WANT DECENT HOUSING, FIT FOR THE SHELTER OF HUMAN BEINGS. We believe that if the landlords will not give decent housing to our Black and oppressed communities, then housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that the people on our communities, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for the people.

5. WE WANT EDUCATION FOR OUR PEOPLE THAT EXPOSES THE TRUE NATURE OF THIS DECADENT AMERICAN SOCIETY. WE WANT EDUCATION THAT TEACHES US OUR TRUE HISTORY AND OUR ROLE IN THE PRESENT-DAY SOCIETY. We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If you do not have knowledge of yourself and your position in the society and the world, then you will have little chance to know anything else.

6. WE WANT COMPLETELY FREE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL BLACK AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE. We believe that the government must provide, free of charge, for the people, health facilities that will not only treat our illnesses, most of which have come about as a result of our oppression, but will also develop preventive medical programs to guarantee our future survival. We believe that mass health education and research programs must be developed to give all Black and oppressed people access to advanced scientific and medical information, so we may provide ourselves with proper medical attention and care.

7. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO POLICE BRUTALITY AND MURDER OF BLACK PEOPLE, OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR, ALL OPPRESSED PEOPLE INSIDE THE UNITED STATES. We believe that the racist and fascist government of the United States uses its domestic enforcement agencies to carry out its program of oppression against Black people, other people of color, and poor people inside the United States. We believe it is our right, therefore, to defend ourselves against such armed forces and that all Black and oppressed people should be armed for self-defense of our homes and communities against these fascist police forces.



Black Panther Founder, Dr. Huey P. Newton

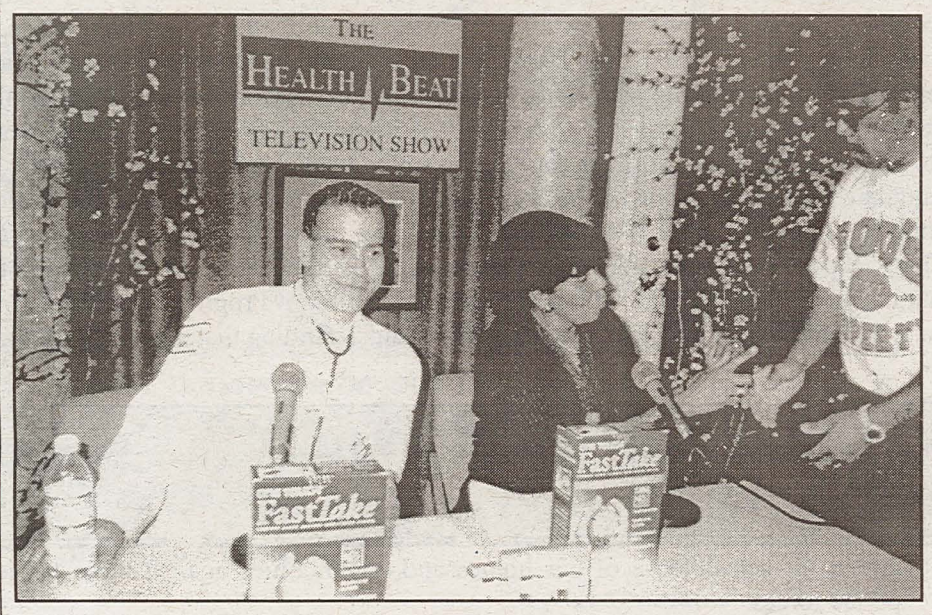
8. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO ALL WARS OF AGGRESSION. We believe that the various conflicts which exist around the world stem directly from the aggressive desires of the U. S. ruling circle and government to force its domination upon the oppressed people of the world. We believe that if the U. S. government or its lackeys do not cease these aggressive wars that it is the right of the people to defend themselves by any means necessary against their aggressors.

9. WE WANT FREEDOM FOR ALL BLACK AND POOR OPPRESSED PEOPLE NOW HELD IN U. S. FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY, CITY, AND MILITARY PRISONS AND JAILS. WE WANT TRIALS BY A JURY OF PEERS FOR ALL PERSONS CHARGED WITH SO-CALLED CRIMES UNDER THE LAWS OF THIS COUNTRY. We believe that the many Black and poor oppressed people now held in U. S. prisons and jails have not received fair and impartial trials under a racist and fascist judicial system and should be free from incarceration. We believe in the ultimate elimination of all wretched, inhuman penal institutions, because the masses of men and women imprisoned inside the United States or by the U. S. military are the victims of oppressive conditions that are the real cause of their imprisonment. We believe that when persons brought to trial that they must be guaranteed, by the United States, juries of their peers, attorneys of their choice and freedom from imprisonment while awaiting trials.

10. WE WANT LAND, BREAD, HOUSING, EDUCATION, CLOTHING, JUSTICE, PEACE AND PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY CONTROL OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY. When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism. It is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.

The James A. Watson Wellness Center



Channel 27 Sunday Forum, 5 - 6 pm: Dr. Watson (host) with guest Dr. Juanita Archer, diabetes specialist from Howard University School of Medicine. Watch the Health Beat Show every Sunday for your health.

The James A. Watson Wellness Center believes in overall health: spiritual, socioeconomic, psychological and physical. The Center has a wonderful staff and its providers include H. Geoffrey Watson, M.D., George Pearson, P.A., Deborah Petterman, Nurse Practitioner, and Omar Staple, P.A.

The James A. Watson Wellness Center accepts most insurance plans and is accepting new patients. For an Appointment call 510.444.9460

"If you knew better you could do better because your health is your wealth and when you have your health you have everything," Dr. Geoffrey Watson.

The Health Beat T.V. Show with (L,R) Keith Carson, Alameda County Supervisors, Dr. Geoffrey Watson, George Frazer, author of* Success Runs in Our Race, *Sandre Swanson, Chief of Staff, Congresswoman Barbara Lee's office.

Your Health Is Your Wealth

By H. Geoffrey Watson, M.D.

African Americans make up 12% of the U.S. population and experience 25% of the preventable deaths. African Americans and in particular African American males have the worse health statistics within the U.S. and more specifically in Alameda County. The past Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher (The first African American to serve as both Surgeon General and Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services) has suggested six areas needing improvement in African Americans and other minorities by the year 2010. These areas includes the reduction of 1) Heart disease 2) Diabetes 3) Cancer 4) HIV 5) Infant mortality and 6) the lack of immunizations.

I ask you again, is being black and a descendent of slaves a risk factor for developing disease?

The Alameda County Public Health Department's county health status report 2,000 has examined multiple factor related to racial disparities. These include race and ethnicity, income, housing, employment, education, age and socio- economic factors. Factors not heavily focused on include the effects of racism and slavery, fear and lack of self-image. Statistics show that individuals who are poorly educated, unemployed, fear the present health care system, are more likely to have obstacles to access, or fear seeking health care.

Is being black or a minority a physiologic or psychologic medical risk factor for developing disease? The answer is yes. When blacks were brought across the ocean, the slave ships may have started with approximately 300 slaves per ship for example. The slaves were fed small amounts of water and mush. To survive the body had to adapt to holding on to salt and carbohydrates. Those individuals who could not hold salt, water and carbohydrate became dehydrated, malnourished and either died or looked unfit for sale. As a result many sick slaves were thrown overboard and many other slaves died. Approximately 1/3 of the slaves survived whose bodies had physically adapted to hold on to salt and carbohydrates. This trait was genetically passed on and is now known as the *Thrifty Gene*.

The Thrifty Gene now causes African Americans to retain salt, carbohydrates and water. The end result is salt retention causing hypertension. Carbohydrate retention causes diabetes and salt retention exacerbating congestive heart failure and heart disease. The slave diet of throw-out foods (Chitterlings, hog maas, pig feet, etc.) were fried and spiced to became eatable to the Southeast USA. This region is now known as the "stroke belt." (Louisiana, Georgia, South Carolina, Texas). This is the region were most California Blacks come from. I ask you again, is being black and a descendent of slaves a risk factor for developing disease? The answer is yes. The middle passage and slavery itself have perpetrated hypertension, diabetes and heart disease in blacks.

Scientists have referred to this process of the thrifty gene as *Genetic Polymorphism*. Something originally designed to help (allow us to survive the boat ride) may eventually hurt us.

The African American individual must be aware of what they put in their mouth. They will hold on to unusual amounts of salt within foods and store carbohydrates causing hypertension, diabetes and strokes. So this year eat to live and walk-the-walk and run for your life.

The African American Health Summit

Friday, January 31, 2003 and Saturday, Feb 1, 2003

Downtown Oakland: Oakland Marriott City Center: 9 AM - 5 PM

The Bay Area's largest free public nutrition and exercise health fair for African Americans will be held at the Oakland Marriott's City Center on January 31 and February 1, 2003. There will be specific cooking and nutrition programs, health screenings (glucose, blood pressure, HIV, cholesterol, etc.), workshops, games and music and health fun. Our health is your health. Come for yourself and bring someone you love.

This program will be a collaboration of the Bay Area Black United Fund, 100 Black Men, The Black Nurses, The James A. Watson Wellness Center, The Public Health Department, you and many, many more organizations. For more information call Linda Dails at 510.763.7270